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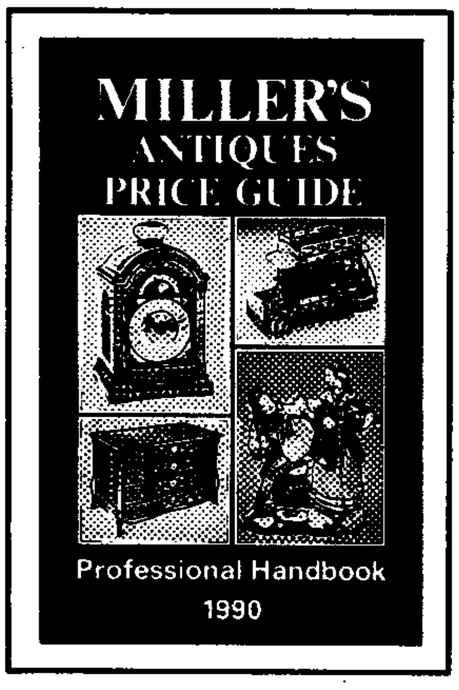

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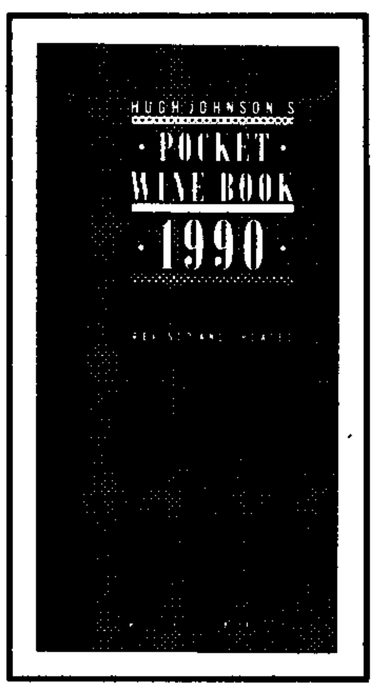

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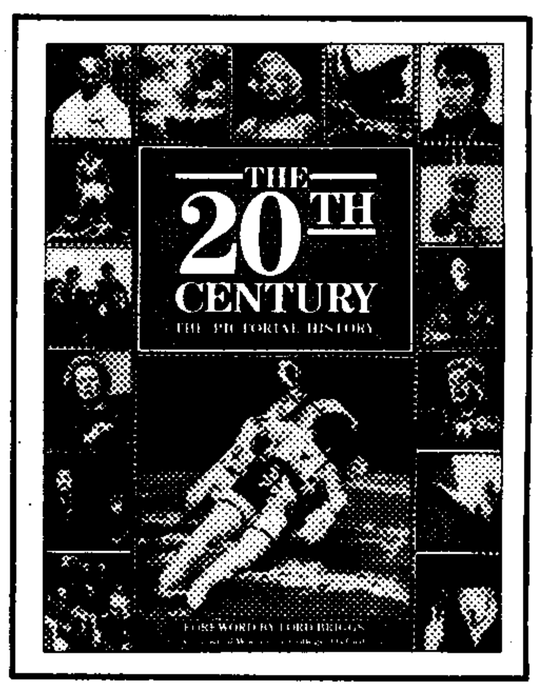

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The white cane doesn't mean 'the poor man is blind.' It means the blind man is poor.

It's extremely difficult for a blind person to get by these days.

What with dustbin bags littering the street, pavements obstructed by cars, and roadworks with almost non-existent safety precautions. You can appreciate why a white cane is vital for their safety.

Yet a white cane makes it even harder for a blind person to get by.

Why? Because they are expected to pay as much as £21.00 for the privilege of using one. Not just once, but twice.

Without the second white cane, they would be completely housebound, should the first one break.

Presented with these facts, it's not difficult to feel sorry for them. But it isn't sympathy that blind people are asking you for. Far from it.

All they want is to be treated like any other member of the public and given the resources and services that will enable them to lead a less daunting life.

Pity won't get blind people the free white canes they urgently need.

Only action from Westminster will.

Look at it another way. If a person breaks a leg, the state gives them a pair of crutches for nothing.

If someone needs a wheelchair, the state gives them one for free.

Photo: Courtesy of John Claridge.

Is a white cane any less essential to help a blind person get about?

In many cases, it's not for their sole benefit that blind people carry white canes when they are out.

Some carry Indicator Canes, not to help with guidance, but purely to let you know that they have a visual impairment.

They don't see complete darkness. In actual fact, only some 3% of blind people see nothing at all.

They use the 'Mobility' or 'Long' cane to negotiate a (relatively) safe path. A path that would be made even safer if textured paving was put on the platforms of rail and tube stations, as well as kerb sides, to prevent them falling onto the track or walking into the path of traffic.

Not to mention putting guard rails around all roadworks, instead of bright orange tape, that does little to stop blind people falling in.

It's hardly surprising that to survive these potential hazards, they have to undergo rigorous mobility training. The problem is, many of them receive no such training, because of insufficient funding.

Of course pity won't get blind people the training they need. Only action from Westminster will. You can help change this pitiful state of affairs, by supporting our campaign to introduce free white canes and legislation that will benefit the mobility of blind people.

We are London Association for the Blind. A nationwide charity providing holiday hotels, accommodation, employment, grants-in-aid and many other services. (So we always gratefully accept any donations).

Fill in the coupon below and send it to Mirella Lindenfels at London Association for the Blind. Then we'll try and get the cost of white canes raised – in Parliament.

"I agree, Legislation should be introduced to help the mobility of blind people."

_____ SIGNATURE

I would like to make a donation of £_____

Credit Card Number and expiry date:

(All major credit cards accepted)

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LONDON ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND NATIONALLY CONCERNED

Send to Mirella Lindenfels. London Association for the Blind. 14-16 Verney Rd, London SE16 3DZ.

Blindness is the least of our problems

REGISTERED CHARITY 205913

London Association for the Blind

FREE BOTTLES OF APPLETON RUM.

Rupert, the account man, was chuffed to say the least. He threw down the client's ad, in the same challenging manner as a knight would his gauntlet. "There!"

The agency's senior creatives almost choked on their prepandial glass of Appleton Estate 5 Year Old.

"Brilliantly simple in its thinking and, if I may make so bold, in its execution" he continued creepily.

The client had to write this ad *himself.*

"Where's the romance, how can you explain that Appleton is still distilled in the same, expensive pot still method as it was a century or two ago?" said the writer fearing for his beloved craft. And his job.

"Or explain how this remarkable noble liquor is a consequence of the unique climatic conditions of Jamaica's Black River Valley."

"I suppose you're now going to tell me about how precious this golden-hued nectar is and that how there's only 4,000 cases available in the UK" Rupert replied mockingly.

"Well we're not touching it" retorted the writer, answering for both himself and his partner.

"Mind you, the type does have a certain folksy quality to it" said his sidekick, the art director.

I UNDERSTAND APPLETON ESTATE 5 YEAR OLD RUM TASTES GREAT AND I'D LIKE TO TRY SOME. I AM OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE, A CONNOISSEUR AND A BON VIVEUR. THIS OFFER ONLY AVAILABLE TO FIRST 150 REPLIES. CLOSES 31·12·89.

SIGNATURE:.....

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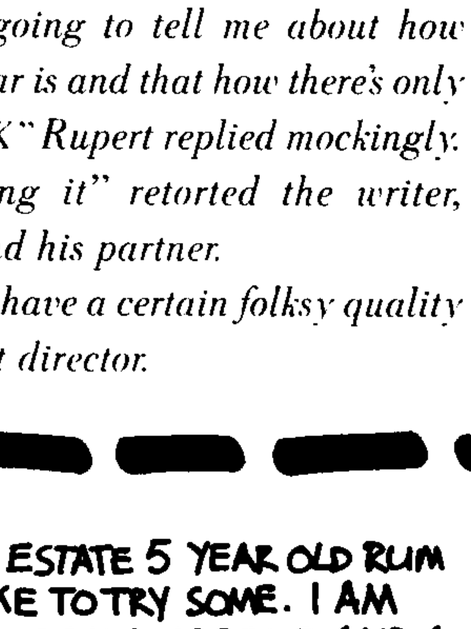
POST TO: "FREE BOTTLES" DEPT. P674(NCH) CRONIN COURT YARD, CORBY NORTHANTS · NN18 8PS.



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FIVE YEAR OLD.
Unfortunately,
NOW AVAILABLE TO
THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Two rib-ticklers

ASTIGMATA PARGITER, NIGEL PARGITER'S SAINTED MOTHER, HAS MANY PROBLEMS.
I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU CAST OUT DRY ROT DO YOU?
NO BUT YOU MAY FIND IT HELPFUL TO THINK OF IT AS A METAPHOR.
Unheard of Ambridge
...a side of THE ARCHERS you haven't yet met.

£3.99

£3.99

from Penguin

Gnome

THE end of the cold war is of course a reason for great rejoicing. The dawn of a new era of freedom for those who have suffered under the yoke of Communism for so long is a development to be wholeheartedly welcomed by the West.

However, it is only sensible even at this crossroads in history to introduce a note of caution. As the East Germans link arms on the Berlin Wall and sing the national anthem, perhaps it is sensible to feel a slight reservation amidst all the euphoria that such scenes must generate.

That reservation is of course that a reunified Germany, a Fourth Reich, under one leader, the Fuhrer, would be the most powerful economic, political and military force in the world. The temptation for Germany to invade Poland would be overwhelming and it would only be a matter of time before stormtroopers marched down the Champs Elysées and the Nazi flag fluttered over the Houses of Parliament. The whole of Europe would be crushed under the ruthless Teutonic heel of a revitalised master race who, in alliance with the brutal Japanese who are even now rearming themselves, would subject the entire world to a tyranny the like of which has never been seen since the Dark Ages.

That, however, is looking ahead and perhaps for now we should be content with an appreciation of the obviously beneficial effects of Mr Gorbachev's glasnost in the Eastern block.

E. Strobes
Lord Gnome
Little England
UK.

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COLOUR SECTION

IT WAS the transport supremo Cecil Parkinson himself who leaked the name of his selection for the chairmanship of British Rail when Sir Bob Reid retires next year. He chose the *Mail on Sunday* for this favour, so the "exclusive" (written by Christopher *Leake*) naming the new man as chairman and chief executive of Shell UK (also called Bob Reid) has some credibility. Reid of Shell has since poured cold water on the idea, but that is standard practice until the official announcement.

The reason for the delay is that the new Reid has yet to be approved by Mrs Thatcher's office. The prime minister has shown great interest in the new appointment and is not at all satisfied that Reid of Shell is any more "one of us" than was his namesake. She still bristles when she recalls the contemptuous way in which Sir Bob Reid refused the services of her "special adviser" — the former bankrupt and hunting king, David Hart.

Hart had served the coal board chief Ian MacGregor well during the miners' strike and offered himself to Reid to do "a similar job" with the railway workers. Thatcher has been heard to say that this year's debacle over the railwaymen's pay claim would never have happened if "my David" had been advising the chairman.

She is not quite sure that a man with the same name who comes from the second eleven of British industry and who is said to be not altogether "safe" in his politics (ie, not a known contributor to Tory causes) is the right choice.

She has put forward two names: that of Michael Bishop, chief of British Midland Airways and a fanatical Tory Party supporter; and Desmond Pitcher, who runs Littlewoods stores for the pools company. Chief problem with Bishop is his right-wing politics; while Pitcher might have proved a little too expensive (he is paid £873,000 a year by Littlewoods). Reid of Shell is considered a snip at £150,000 (only £30,000 more than his Shell salary).

The leak to the *Mail on Sunday* was seen as a desperate bid to make up the prime minister's mind, but could have precisely the opposite effect.

A WHISPERING campaign has started against the Guildford Four to coincide with the public statements of people like the former Lord Chancellor, Lord Hailsham, that the four are "not necessarily innocent". (The most fundamental principle in English criminal law has now been rewritten to state: "A citizen is considered *not necessarily* innocent until proved guilty".)

The campaign has been initiated at Scotland Yard where senior officers who have spent many years feeding crime correspondents stories are now asking for "a favour in return". They beg the correspondents to include an item in their newspapers to the effect that Paul Hill, Gerard Conlon and Patrick Armstrong — three of the Guildford Four — were all on a "secret list" of known IRA activists and that Carole Richardson, the fourth, was so close to Armstrong she knew perfectly well what he was up to.

Articles along these lines have been written and submitted to editors and news editors. Up to now, none of them has been published, largely because no one has been able to produce the alleged "IRA list" nor to back it up with any credible evidence.

BRITISH Aerospace is about to make a surprise announcement: it has lost stage two of its massive Yamama arms deal with the Saudis (see *Eyes passim*) for Tornado aircraft.

Stage two involved aircraft, support services and a contract worth £15 billion. So why have the Saudis backed out?

They have decided that they prefer the American F15E fighter, which formerly they could not buy because of the pro-Israel lobby in Washington. Bush has decided to ignore this and supply the Saudis with what they want.

ANOTHER fire in west London, not far from the fatal one in Cornwall Gardens, Kensington, reported in recent *Eyes*, has further exposed the scandal of inadequate equipment in the London Fire Brigade.

The blaze at 33 Longridge Road, Earls Court, was quickly put out — luckily for those in the upper storeys who could not be rescued because no rescue ladder was immediately available. There is no rescue ladder held at Kensington fire station, so one had to be ferried from elsewhere. This took well over quarter of an hour, a lapse that could have been fatal.

London firemen are meanwhile ruing the loss of yet another important ladder: the 50ft wheeled escape ladder, which was flexible and easy to pitch. These have been phased out to make way for the "135" ladder which is not half so easy to pitch.

In East Sussex, the 50ft ladder has had to be introduced to fight fires in high buildings, especially hotels in Brighton. Someone should tell the chief fire officer of the London Fire Brigade there are hotels — and even some quite high buildings — in London too.

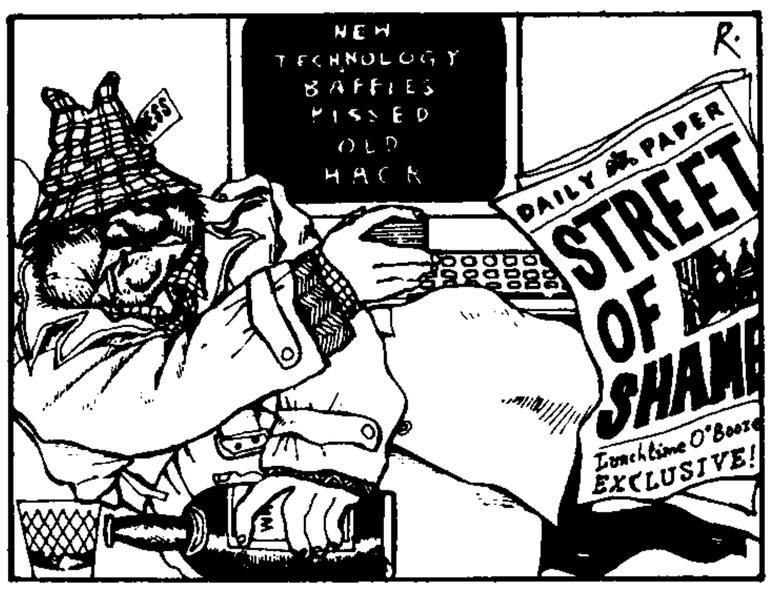
THE TOP PR job at Britain's best-known insurance company, the Prudential, has been vacant for many months now. Why is there no one to fill it?

The answer is that it is being kept warm for someone who is still gainfully employed elsewhere, but may suddenly need a well-paid bolthole. Step forward Sir (as he will be — or perhaps even Lord) Bernard Ingham, Britain's best known PR man, currently employed at Number Ten.

Luckily for both of them, Ingham happens to be a close friend of the Pru's new chief executive Sir (as he most certainly will be) Mick Newmarch. Newmarch is so keen to appoint Ingham that he can hardly wait for Thatcher to announce her (or his) retirement.

Of course, the future Sir Bernard would have to come in at board level as director of public affairs, but the post remains vacant pending upheavals in Downing Street.

"You see – we can do anything the ambulance men do"



NICK LLOYD, editor of the *Daily Express*, was not amused at the recent result of the paper's millionaire competition.

When the *Getsworse* is desperately trying to recruit younger readers, it was unfortunate that the winning ticket turned out to belong to a 71-year-old. Moreover, there were raised eyebrows when the lady's female companion joined her to receive the million-pound cheque. "Christ!" ejaculated Lloyd. "Not only is she a pensioner, she's a bloody lesbian as well!"

WHEN Elton John biographer Philip Norman discovered that *The Bedside Guardian* had been printed containing one of his articles, his agent rang the newspaper in high dudgeon.

"Mr Norman is very upset," he said. "You must either remove the article from the book or pay him the same fee as he originally received." As this was £550, it would almost wipe out the modest budget for the anthology's 59 other contributors. Everyone else had agreed to accept a nominal fee of just £10, but Norman insisted on his full whack.

Curiously, Norman's article was entitled "Fantasy Island plc? Britain in the Eighties". It is a diatribe against the cultural values of the Thatcher decade and contains the memorable assertion that "a world of predatory commerce addresses us."

AS SHE awaits full compensation from Her Maj's government, one of the newly-released Guildford Four, Carole Richardson, has already been the recipient of Cap'n Bob's unbounded generosity.

Following Richardson's release, the *Sunday Mirror* commissioned Ros Franey, who co-authored a book on the Guildford Four's case, to interview her, and the paper agreed to pay Richardson £100,000 for the privilege.

The interview duly came in and was published, although the editor was disappointed that there hadn't been more about her curtailed love life. When Maxwell, who was in Argentina, was informed that the interview had turned out to be not quite as exciting as originally anticipated, he ordered the *Sunday Mirror*'s editor to pay Richardson the lesser sum of £20,000.

LAST MONTH bosses at Express Newspapers' Grey Lubyanka installed expensive new state-of-the-art infra-red video equipment in the company car park in the hope of preventing hacks from driving away with computer keyboards and other office baubles.

On the very first day of operation they hit the jackpot — though not quite as intended. At 11pm, security staff glancing at their monitors were goggle-eyed to notice a senior hack from the *Daily Star* stretched out on the back seat of his car being given a vigorous "blow-job" by a young office girl.

When the existence of the incriminating video became known, the hack in question at first basked in the glory of it. "Best gob-job I ever had," he boasted to his colleagues. He also revealed that he had paid her £10 for the service.

But it then dawned on him that senior management at the Express Group — up to and including Lord "Shakin'" Stevens — might not treat the incident so lightly. He promptly changed his story, saying that the hack in the car had been someone else entirely, and that he himself had been safely at home with his wife and children at the time.

Lord Stevens' executives are now studying the video closely. An extra worry for the hack in question is that news of the incident may reach the girl's family, leading London gangsters. Not so long ago one of the girl's relations turned up in the *Star* office and warned the hacks that if any of them laid a finger on her they would have their knee-caps shot off.

Express Newspapers' general manager Struan Coupar told the *Eye* this week that he could neither confirm nor deny the existence of the notorious video. He said that it was not his policy to comment on "security matters".

A RECENT *Eye* revealed the plot among tabloid newspapers to "get" the TV programme *Hard News* — the results were not long coming.

The *Sun* of 11 November carried an earth-shattering story: that the programme's Mikhal Levin was having an affair with her editor Paul Woolich. Given that *Hard News* is on Channel 4, the average *Sun* reader might well have wondered "who they?"

Sun editor Kelvin McKenzie tells us he wanted a juicier story: something along the lines of Woolich losing his marbles over Levin and as a result being so distraught that he allowed dubious items about wonderful papers like the *Sun* into the programme. This attempt to prove that everything about *Hard News* was rubbish did not quite come off and McFilth had to make do with the love-nest shock.

The source of the story is as murky as the *Sun*'s desire to print it. The *Sun* quoted Levin's former husband, William Shawcross, in its piece, who was himself seen chatting to *Hard News* journalist John Sweeney in the Groucho club before it all broke.

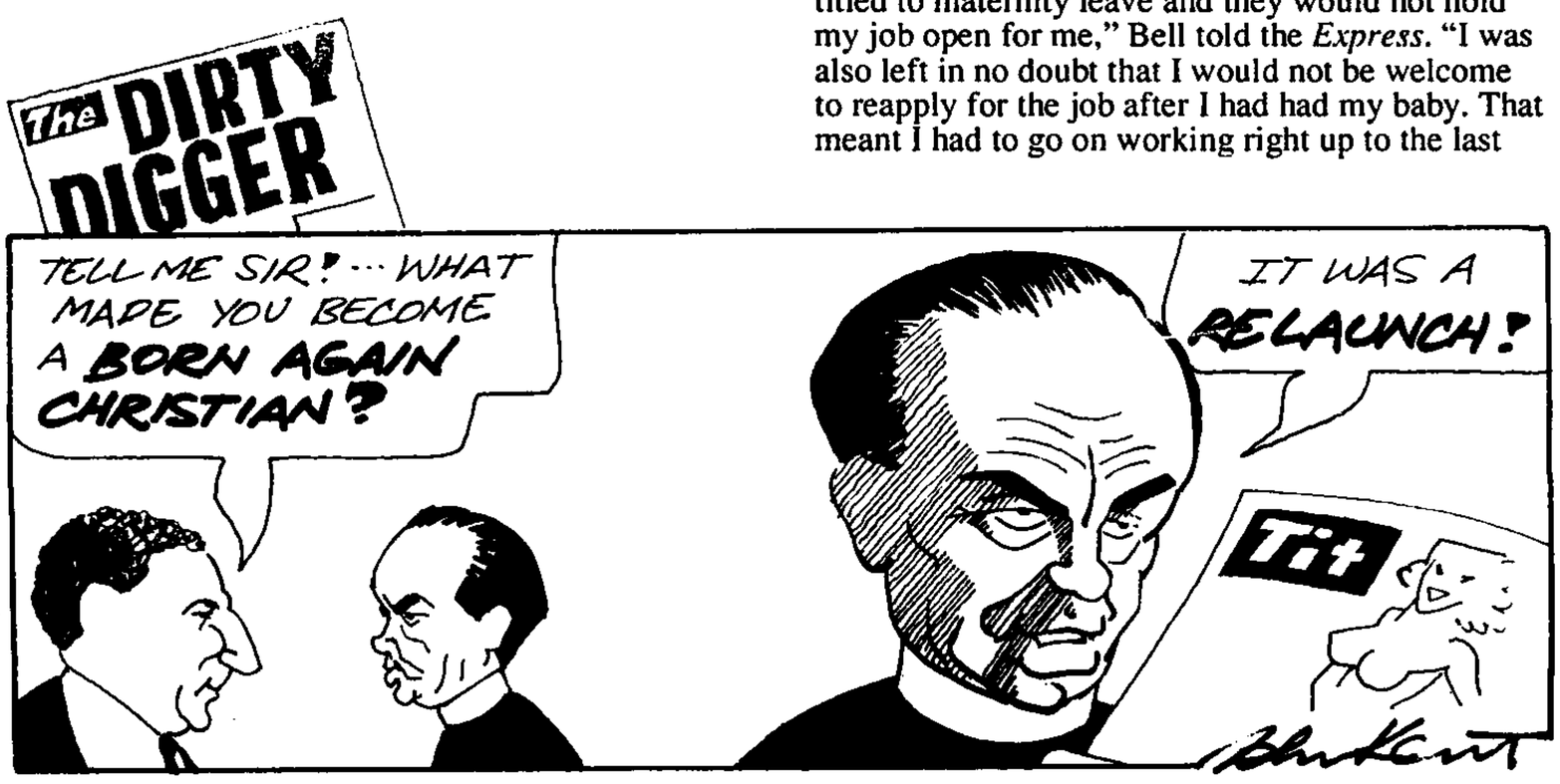
McKenzie did not deny Shawcross's link, nor would he comment on Sweeney. Is it possible that a *Sun* journalist, as is being claimed, overheard the two men talking in the club and ran the story? The programme's usual investigative zeal has been strangely muted with regard to this one.

A RECENT feature in the *Daily Getsworse* on maternity leave told the sad story of one Julia Bell. She had been working as "chief sub-editor for a magazine" for almost two years when she had to take a few weeks off to have a baby.

"The company simply told me I was not entitled to maternity leave and they would not hold my job open for me," Bell told the *Express*. "I was also left in no doubt that I would not be welcome to reapply for the job after I had had my baby. That meant I had to go on working right up to the last moment so that I could save as much money as possible."

Who was this villainous employer? The *Express* did not say. It was in fact *UK Press Gazette* (self-styled "Journalism's Newspaper") and more specifically the magazine's hated owners, Tim and Tina Benn — known to their unadoring employees as "The Toff and the Tart".

Bell is one of many hacks to fall victim to the pushy Benns. When Sir Charles Mostyn Wintour resigned his editorship of *UKPG* four years ago he explained to his staff that it was because "I can't work with those people any more". And only last week the news editor of *UKPG*'s sister publication *Magazine Week*, Tanja Sabiers, decided she would not serve the Bennite regime for a minute longer. She has cast off her shackles and fled to a new and no doubt happier life in... East Berlin.



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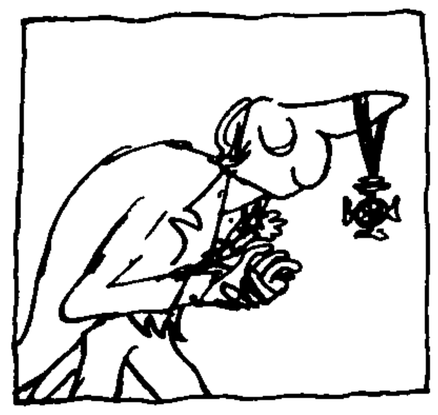


Mrs Thatcher's real strength is as a visionary leader. Her strong personality creates constant interest in admirers and detractors alike. But Mr Kinnock and others will find that, like Miss Jean Brodie, Mrs Thatcher is the square on the hypotenuse, whilst they are merely the squares on the other two sides. She is equal to them and above this passing phase.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,

GORDON WHITE (Chairman),
Hanson Industries: letter to
The Times

Speaking of curvy grandmas, I thought Mrs Thatcher looked absolutely radiant in her strange television encounter with Brian Walden. Her skin glowed, her make-up was perfect, her clothes exquisite and flattering. And her poise, under the critical gaze of millions, unassailable. It occurs to me that these are just the sort of qualifications needed for a new career on the catwalk.

MINETTE MARRIN
Sunday Telegraph

Submitted by M.B. Mottram and Anonymous Telegraph hack.

£10 paid for all candidates put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

WORLD OF HYPE

READERS will recall how Alan Hulme, ace theatre reviewer and feature writer for the *Manchester Evening News*, wrote a profile back in July on the troubled north-west package holiday company Airtours, which left holidaying families stranded.

Hulme was able to delve a little deeper and get the full story behind the holiday heartache, pointing out that Airtours really *did* care. No doubt he was aided by a full briefing from his wife Kathryn, who is an account director with Manchester PR firm Staniforth Williams and just happens to handle Airtours.

Showing what an enterprising fellow he is at digging up stories, Hulme followed this with a profile of Manchester financier Peter Rickitt in the *MEN* on 20 October — just as the market was settling down after Black Monday.

Though the money men were coming in for all sorts of stick that week, Hulme (not a financial correspondent, after all) blathered on for 800 words about the fat financier (waist size 42), telling readers: "He's a high-powered innovative operator..."

Rickitt's PR is handled by Staniforth Williams.

BLUE-BLOODED Sir Ian Gilmour, known as "Cemetery Face", can look forward to a difficult week as Tory colleagues led by Sir Anthony Meyer urge him to stand against Thatch in the December leadership elections.

Meyer says that he will stand anyway, but tells Sir Ian that the baronet will get many more votes and can run as the younger man.

Sir Ian is 63. Mrs Thatcher is 64.

LIFE is hard at the moment for Terence Higgins, Tory chairman of the Commons treasury committee. His chances of a knighthood, peerage or jobs on quangos when he retires are fast disappearing thanks to the bad behaviour of some of his committee members.

Earlier this year Higgins upset Thatch when his committee came out in favour of Delors and European monetary union (see *Eyes passim*). Then some Tory members went ape on a committee visit to Washington and insulted Sir Anthony Acland, our delightful ambassador.

The Foreign Office is still agog at the story and Douglas Hurd is said to need a stiff drink every time he is reminded of it. As if that were not enough, the same committee members were involved in a fracas with two women of the night outside New York's Inter-Continental Hotel. One of the women grabbed the testicles of one of the Hon Members who shooed her away. God knows what the two of them were after as it was broad daylight at the time.

Back in Britain bolshy Labour members have put down a formal motion to be debated in private session that former Chancellor Nigel Lawson and ex-economic adviser Sir Alan Walters be invited to give evidence to the committee. Higgins is desperately lobbying Labour and Liberal members who have a majority on the committee not to go ahead because neither he nor Thatch can take any more.

THE education select committee is in a shambles. At its last private meeting, amid angry scenes that members promised not to leak to the press, it failed to elect a new chairman following the resignation of Timothy Raison.

Raison told the public that he resigned because of rows over leaks. Off the record he has made it clear that he resigned because Tories on the committee have been blocking a factual report on teacher shortages.

On 15 November two Tories, Harry Greenaway and Malcolm Thornton, came forward as possible new chairmen. Greenaway has no chance of election since the support of Labour MPs is essential. They are prepared to support the more liberal Thornton, but he took fright during the meeting because he did not wish to be seen to be consorting with the enemy. Put in the chair for just one meeting, he refused to let Labour MPs vote on a motion to give him the job permanently. Since this was the only item on the agenda, the meeting ended in chaos.

In desperation, committee members are now complaining to the all-powerful chairman of the liaison committee (it consists of the chairmen of all the select committees) that procedures are being abused and the committee system being brought into disrepute. The chairman of liaison is Terence Higgins, also chairman of the treasury committee.

JOHN SMITH, shadow chancellor, is desperately keen to dissociate himself from John "Bonkers" Smith, victor in the Vale of Glamorgan by-election.

"Bonkers", as he is affectionately known because he sometimes behaves like the military policeman he once was, stood for the NEC and got a respectable vote because a number of constituencies confused him with the shadow chancellor.

One person who still cannot tell the difference between "Bonkers" and the other Smith is Roy Hattersley, Labour's deputy leader. Fattersley was recently delighted when aides told him that John Smith was prepared to become his PPS and baggage carrier.

This was of course "Bonkers". Hatterjee has not yet twigged that the other John Smith will be asking Hattersley to carry his bags before long.

'Backbiter'

Ian Hislop
Richard Ingrams
John Wells
Barry Fantoni

will sign copies of
the four new

Private Eye books

at
John Menzies
56 Old Broad Street
London EC2
on 1st December
12.30-1.30pm

CHARITY NEWS

WHEN THE Duke of Westminster appeared on *Wogan* in January to plug the charity ICAN (Invalid Children's Aid Nationwide), it was a promising start to 1989 for the 100-year-old charity which provides special education for disabled children. Yet within a few months, the activities of former director-general Jim McKinnon and his sidekick Paul Stephenson had divided the charity in two, creating confusion and discord and raising questions about ICAN's finances.

This is doubly embarrassing for the duke as it comes soon after the internal convulsions in another of his supported charities, the Spastics Society (see *Eyes passim*).

Ex-Jesuit McKinnon was not around to answer questions at the ICAN annual general meeting as he has decamped to be director of the Disabled Living Foundation.

In his last weeks at ICAN, McKinnon embarked on a major split-up of the charity. "Speak for Yourself", a successful project improving the language skills of mentally handicapped children, was axed by his executive manager, Stephenson. A number of other staff were also declared redundant — prominent among them were seniors like Liz Rimmer and Jean Moses who had coincidentally voiced opposition to McKinnon and Stephenson in the past.

Encouraged by the redundancies, ICAN's remaining Manchester staff enthusiastically agreed to Stephenson's proposal to set up a breakaway charity called the ICAN Alan Graham Trust (after ICAN's late founder). The breakaway charity is taking over ICAN's lucrative contracts for Employment Training — worth some £3 million a year — and will be directed by Stephenson.

But why were ICAN trustees in London willing to accept the split and hive off the valuable Employment Training work? Perhaps it was the super-efficient way McKinnon and Stephenson ran the charity's ET operation. No doubt the two of them can completely justify the cars, the staff, the large offices, cordless telephones, fax machines and other impedimenta in Manchester paid for by the Government under the ET programme.

It will, however, be interesting to hear how they justify the purchase of a number of racehorses with government funds provided to a charity for ET equipment. Presumably they will argue that the trustees approved these transactions and that all is in order.

The trustees no doubt hope their horse-loving patron Brenda and president Yvonne do not get to hear about the ICAN Alan Graham Trust's management of horses. At one of the trust's stables in South Wales recently the stable manager showed young trainees how to deal with a lame horse: he killed it with an axe.

When the Duke of Westminster, president of the breakaway charity, launched it in Manchester on 26 September, he was accompanied by that well-known personality, the racehorse Red Rum — still in one piece when last seen.

CULT CORNER

RUSSELL Miller's much-praised (see *Eye* 675) biography of L Ron Hubbard has been languishing unsold in US publisher Henry Holt's warehouses ever since Scientology front New Era International of Denmark successfully brought a case for breach of copyright in New York.

New Era did not have grounds for disputing the accuracy of Millers' thorough hatchet job on the founder of Scientology; it merely claims to hold the rights on almost every word penned by the old fraud, so use of any material breaches copyright.

Following that disastrous decision (based on the J.D. Salinger case), the Scientologists have eroded first amendment rights even further and obtained a court order that forced Carol Publishing Group to hand over the manuscript of *A Piece of Blue Sky* by John Atack. That is billed as "The definitive biography of an evil man and 'his plot to take over the planet'". Scientology, meanwhile, is planning an official biography of the grasping guru which will, of course, tell the whole truth.

BANKING

QUESTION: just how far do the Columbian drug barons reach? ANSWER: right into banking circles within the City of London.

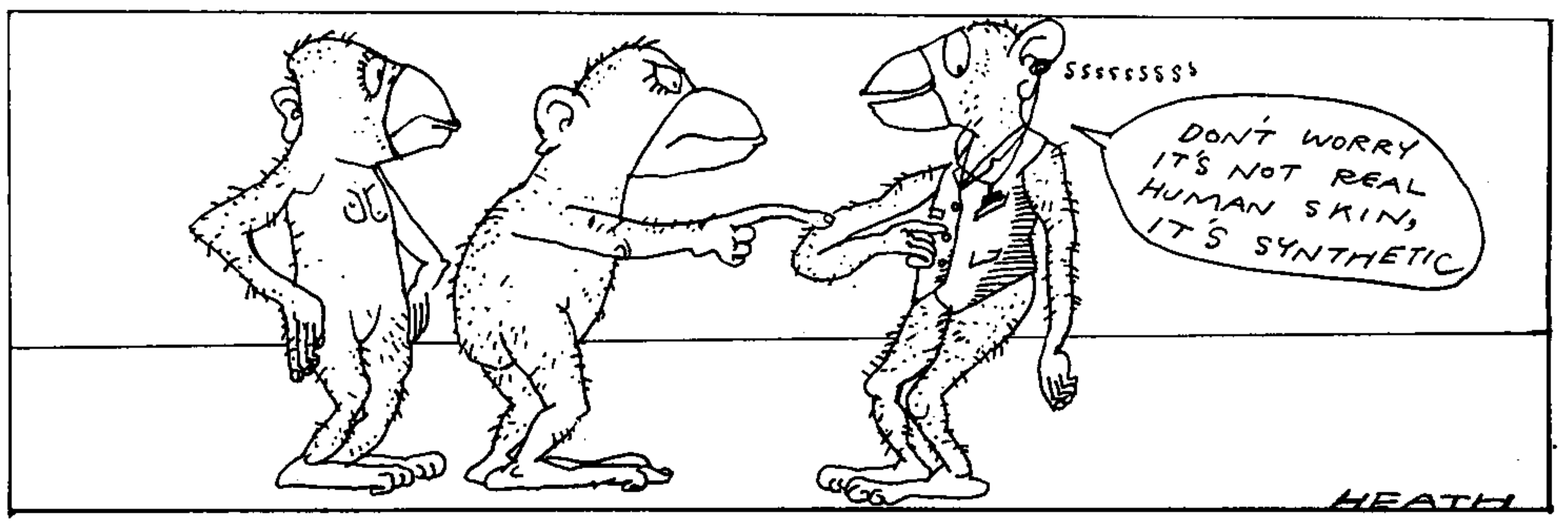
In the High Court on 9 November, Mr Justice Nolan granted orders seizing bank accounts belonging to a Mexican national wanted in the United States to answer allegations of drug smuggling and murder in connection with the notorious Medallin cartel.

Jose Gonzolu Rodrigues-Gacha had $2.6 million seized from deposits held in the Bank of Credit and Commerce International and the Dresdener Bank's City branches. This was made possible by an agreement between Britain and the US to seize drug funds and other laundered securities.

Unfortunately for the public, but fortunately for the banks, confidentiality prevents the disclosure of exactly what they thought the *actual* source of these funds might have been.

NUMERO UNO

MICHAEL HEATH



Grovel

SADLY my good friend the Hon Christopher Monckton, son of Viscount Monckton, lost his weekly column on the *Evening Standard* and has been shunted into the role of chief leader writer.

He has penned a number of daft leaders, such as the one condemning independent producer Christopher Hird for making an "unbalanced" Channel 4 programme about Parkinson's share dealings. Monckton, like the rest of us, had not yet seen it, of course.

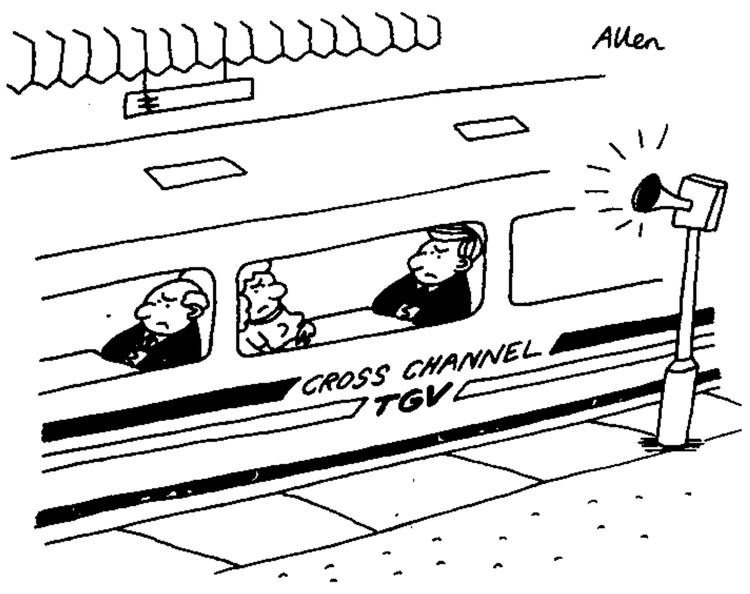
Perhaps one reason for Monckton's discomfiture over the Parkinson affair could be the fact that he himself might be a victim of guilt by association. Monckton used to work in the Leaderene's home policy unit at 10 Downing Street and has lately been offering his services as a lobbyist to several exceedingly generous, though rather shady, men in pinstripe suits.

For example, Christopher Monckton Limited has been advising City pariah Mordens, which has been seeking a licence from the Association of Futures Brokers and Dealers, a regulatory body that operates under the umbrella of the Securities and Investments Board. Run by the Hon Robert Harboard-Hammond, formerly with disgraced retail commodities brokers LHW, this firm has been excoriated in the press for preying on investors in the highly volatile futures and options markets. Michael Walters, a financial hack on Monckton's sister paper, the *Daily Mail*, has even urged that the company be closed down and the AFBD has so far been reluctant to grant it a licence.

Monckton has also been advising Noble Warren, a firm of mortgage and bond brokers, which despite his earnest efforts on its behalf has had its application for a licence to trade in securities turned down by the SIB.

● *ROYAL roustabouts the Duke and Duchess of York are not as impoverished as they would have us believe.*

For in addition to Andrew and Fergiana's civil list monies and the royalties from her wretched children's book about a helicopter, the Duchess of Pork was meant to have received over £100,000 for her outpourings to Philippa Kennedy in the Daily Getsworse earlier this year. Fergie failed to mention in this exclusive that she was pregnant, which may explain why the Dailygetsmuchworse has not paid out in full as yet. Meanwhile, the Duchess has received enough for 50-odd skiing holidays.



"There will now be a slight delay while the English build their rail-link"

Pseuds Corner

To the Editor of *Private Eye*

Sir,

I understand that you have been brightening up your damp and nettly Corner with a stolen plume or two of mine (Eye, 27 October). Commentary from me would be superfluous, so perhaps I may refer your readers to my old friend Will Langland, who seems to have had one of your predecessors in mind when he wrote PIERS PLOWMAN *X. 125 (B-text, my edition).*

Of course, I cannot recommend that your informant and your readers should actually attempt this operation, as it may bring on serious internal disorders. After all, no one knows where your organ may have been in its travels; and with so many gunshot wounds in your pedal extremities, your dear old corpus vile needs all the friends it can get.

Yours in the bosom of Euterpe,
A.V.C. SCHMIDT,
Balliol College, Oxford.

In spring 1987 at a hotel in downtown Chicago, I strapped on headphones and went for a run. Somewhere over by the lake, *Lovin' Feelin'* came on. I jammed the volume all the way up and the clash of those voices came through again. When they started begging and pleading — "Baby, baby, I'd get down on my knees for you," sang Medley. "If you would only love me like you used to do," responded Hatfield — tears sprang from my eyes. In the heart of a population of six million people, I was suddenly abandoned and alone. But I understood at last: we worship the thing we fear.

DAVE MARSH
Sunday Correspondent

In direct mail you achieve positioning by careful attention to everything: the typefaces, the tone of voice, the nature of the offer, the weight, colour and feel of the paper, the quality of the design and print. Everything.

Your market will ask, does it *hang* right? They'll piece together evidence like a jurist at a murder trial. Do they trust you? Do they want you in their homes or office? Do they want to make a *relationship* with you? And what type of relationship — long and happy? Or a one-off? Can they have faith in you?

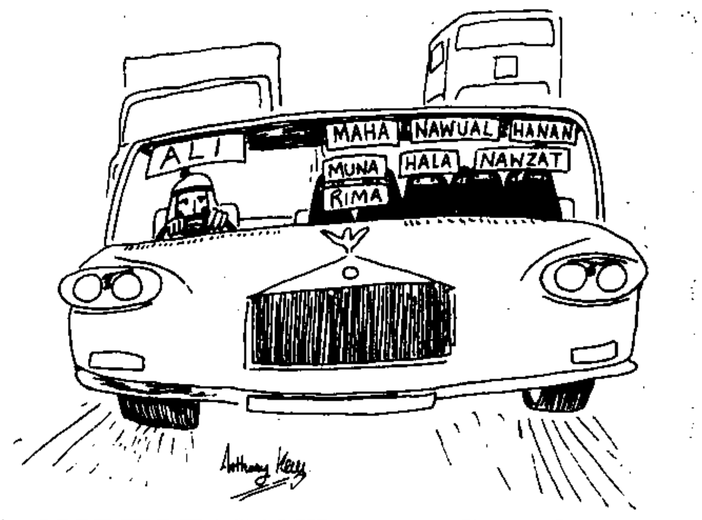
JOHN FRASER-ROBINSON
Address

Film flux is the serial accretion of stasis. Mimetically, on film Heraclitus' river would still be itself, the same. In the case of animation, however, film flux is the product of the deconstructed automatism of "the life-world", of arrested development: the conscious incrementation of discrete and absolute segmentation, the calibration of calibrations. The clock is one model of calibration, the ruler another: around 360° or along a 12-inch. Space (and time) is registered as the cumulative suffixion of median and interstice, a bit like Christian Morgenstern's famous picket fence. This median is also the bar separating the numerator and denominator of a fraction: between 1 and 24, say. (I have tried in vain to discover the name of the marks on a ruler that demarcate length, or the line that bisects the proportion of a fraction. I have thus settled for "median".) Film is a tape-measure of psychological space — both coil and straight-edge — the black bar between frames being its median: in this is paradigmatic.

PAUL HAMMOND
Afterimage

CONTRIBUTORS: A.V.C. Schmidt, Martin Childs, Dorothy Jackson, Michael Brooke.

£5 paid for entries



AN UNPLEASANT start to Saturday morning when my friend Ned Twinky's delightful Radio 4 show, *Loosenders*, has a libel lawyer as a guest.

A man called Oscar Boozalot, or Losealot, or something similar comes on to deny that there is a "cosy cartel" of libel lawyers. He then says his fees are very reasonable and caps it all by saying that the present legal crisis is a good thing because "it brings lawyers to the fore".

I almost faint with amazement, but then I realise that old Oscar is being ironic! He is joking of course. What a witty fellow he is and how clever of Ned to have him on as a "spoof" item!

I UNDERSTAND that porn novelist Julie Burchill caused a storm recently at the Soviet embassy.

Attending a party to celebrate the 72nd anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution in the company of her doting husband Cosmo, La Burchill was approached by a short Russian gentleman exuding bonhomie and topping up glasses from a vodka bottle.

Noticing how glum she was, he invited La Burchill to toast the wonderful changes sweeping his country. Instead, she proceeded to lambast him about the quisling Gorbachev and to lament the good old days under Brezhnev, Andropov, Chernenko, etc.

The Soviet ambassador retreated from this harangue, bemused.

MY dear friend the clapped-out photographer David Bailey is the latest lucky recipient of a "*Correspondent* Questionnaire" for the regular feature in the *Sunday Despondent*'s Magazine.

He has now returned the questionnaire, duly completed. A few extracts:

"What is your idea of greatest happiness? Coming."

"What is your greatest fear? Not coming."

"What is the trait you most deplore in yourself? My good looks."

"What is your greatest extravagance? My penis."

"What is your favourite word? Pussy."

"What keeps you awake at night? Lust."

Anyone looking forward to seeing this in their super soaraway *Despondent* will wait in vain. The magazine's editor, Henry Streep-Porter, has decided it is all far too exciting for his somnolent readers and has banned it.

● *I RECEIVE a phone call from Simon Clark, former Tory student activist who runs the Media Monitoring Unit, an organisation sponsored by right-wing benefactors and inspired by Norman Tebbit's attack on bias in BBC news coverage a couple of years ago.*

The "unit" consists largely of Simon sitting in front of his TV screaming at any sentiment expressed that is left of Genghis Khan.

He asks me if I can tell him anything about the private life of Christopher Hird, the ex-Sunday Times hack who has produced the controversial programme about Parky.

"What school did he go to?", asked Clark whiningly. "What do you know about his marital status?"

I send this sordid little tyke away with a flea in his ear. What effrontery to suggest that I might be interested in spreading scurrilous gossip about a person's private life! How outrageous!

Pip Pip!

NOOKS and CORNERS

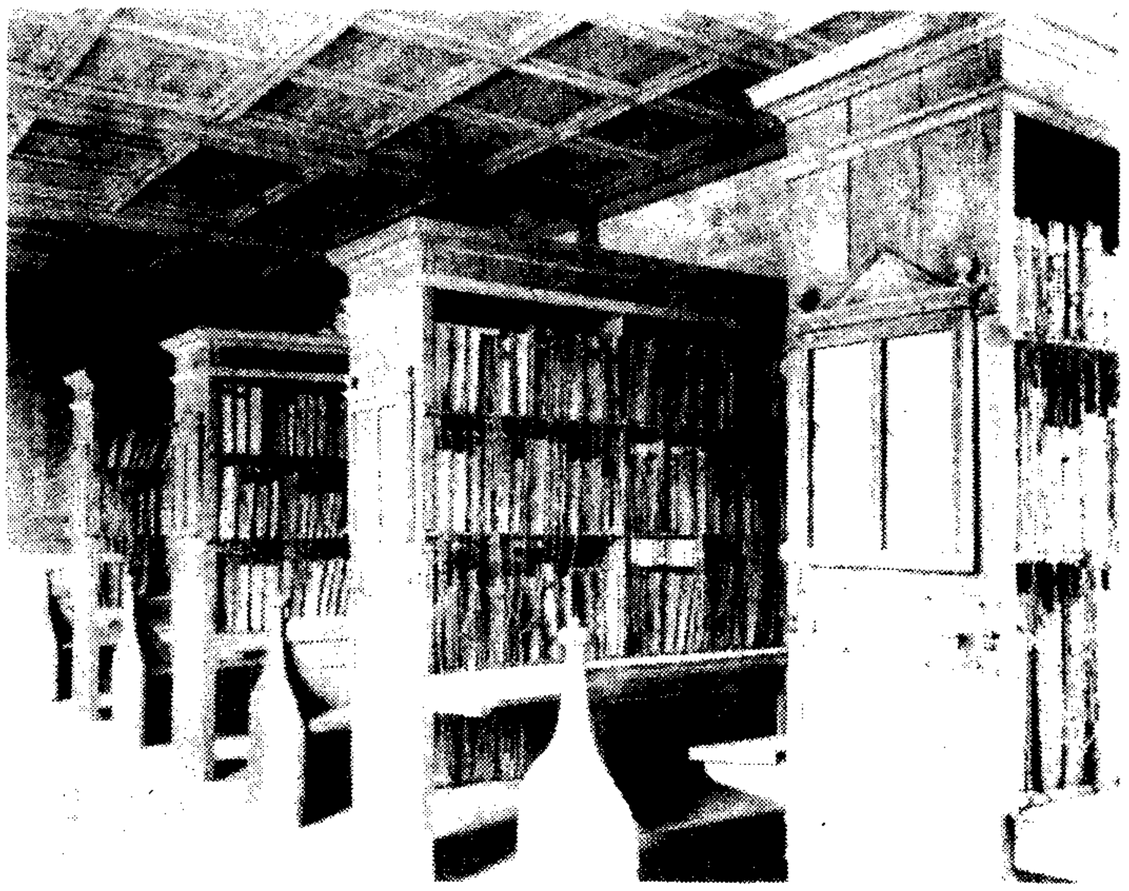
I AM dismayed to learn that Mr John Paul Getty and the National Heritage Memorial Fund are to combine to provide £3 million to erect a new building by Hereford Cathedral to house both the celebrated Mappa Mundi and the Chained Library.

My reaction to this noble and generous offer may surprise my devoted readers, particularly as Mr Getty is one of the very few heroes recognized by this column. It was Mr Getty, of course, who — inspired by reading the *Eye*, I am reliably informed — was moved to offer money to Ely Cathedral to get that establishment out of its difficulties on express condition that the dreadful scheme to build noddy houses on the old gardens to its east was abandoned. In that case, he saved Ely from its dean, the Very bearded and Revd "Bill" Patterson, that model Thatcherite cleric.

Now he is baling out another dreadful and destructive dean. It was the Very Revd Peter Haynes who secretly proposed flogging the Mappa Mundi at Sotheby's last year to raise some ready cash, hoping that nobody would notice if the 13th century map disappeared from the north choir aisle. It was also the Very Revd Peter Haynes who tried to build a shopping centre in Church Street to the east of Hereford Cathedral so as to improve the Chapter's hopelessly managed finances.

By such cynical and barbarous attempts at asset-stripping, Mr Dean treated the people of the once fair city of Hereford with disdain and brought the cathedral in his charge into ridicule and disrepute in the eyes of the nation. After such damaging failure, does Mr Dean then resign and go back to his model railways? Of course not.

But enough of the Very Revd Peter Haynes. He is not my concern and it is, of course, wholly admirable and necessary that the Mappa Mundi should be taken out of the control of such clerics while being restored to Hereford Cathedral where it has always been. It is perfectly conceivable that a good new building could be designed in which this remarkable object could be displayed and explained, rather as the Bayeux Tapestry is exhibited close to its original location in the cathedral there. This is what should have been proposed in the first place, rather than smuggle in Lord Gowrie and his pin-striped looters. No, my concern is with the Chained Library, for it should not be moved.



The Chained Library is housed in the muniment room above the north transept aisle built by Bishop Aquablanca in 1268. The spiral staircase which leads up to it dates from the 14th century. After the Reformation the books and furniture were removed to the Lady Chapel but were restored in 1855 to their original home, where the early 17th century oak bookcases with attached chains were reassembled. In 1929, the library and old muniment room were carefully restored making it a particularly beautiful and perfect early Jacobean library whose appeal comes from its recondite location in its original home — one which affords romantic views between the bookshelves into the interior of the transept below.

Take the books and shelves out of this room and much of their interest and purpose will be lost. Why should anybody want to move them? Mr Dean tells us he wants a new building "which because it will be at ground level will be accessible to everyone". That is, you cannot get a wheelchair up the present staircase. Nor, I note, can you get one up the spiral stair of the Monument in the City of London, say, nor down the steep stairs inside HMS Victory. Should both these venerable structures be mutilated or rebuilt in consequence? Of course not. This sort of sentimental posturing in deference to the disabled lobby has gone quite far enough. Architecture and historical integrity are what matter.

So I appeal to the great and good Mr Getty: LEAVE THE CHAINED LIBRARY WHERE IT IS and where it belongs. The money would be better spent on putting back Sir Gilbert Scott's magnificent screen so stupidly removed from the cathedral in the 1960s.

SOMETHING else which should have remained where it was is Canova's sculpture of the Three Graces in Woburn Abbey, whose recent travels in America in search of ready cash I discussed in Eye 720.

I am happy to report that Mid-Bedfordshire District Council has been advised by English Heritage and by lawyers that the removal of this masterpiece from the Temple built for it required listed building consent and that enforcement action could be taken against the Marquess of Tavistock. But have the councillors accepted this professional advice? Of course not. These craven and sycophantic representatives of the people would not dream of offending dear Lady Tavistock. There is always the chance of a sweet sherry at Woburn, after all. Such are the politics of deference.

'Piloti'

LIBEL NEWS

TOM BOWER, author of *Maxwell The Outsider* and already defendant in a libel action brought against the hardback edition of the book, has received a further salvo of writs from Cap'n Bob.

In the UK, Maxwell will at the end of the month be attempting for the fourth time to obtain an injunction against the paperback edition, due to be published by W.H. Allen early next year.

However, the most intriguing development in this long battle has come in France where Maxwell has invoked privacy laws as well as libel laws against the French edition of Bower's book. The writ, from French solicitors Max de St Denis and Didier Segur, is hilarious — not even Cap'n Bob's lickspittle Peter Jaybotham could have come up with such nonsense as: "Robert Maxwell by reason of his lifestyle remains a reserved person anxious to protect his life and activities from the rather morbid interest of specialist investigators."

The writ complains that Bower's book depicts Maxwell as "an unpleasant, vain, untruthful, opportunist, and wheeler-dealer character", and objects to the invasion of his privacy under the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen. It also goes on to say that "it is a question of an absolute right belonging to the holder to authorise or forbid the use of his name", and it accuses Bower of "illicit use of his [Maxwell's] name which appears several times on every page" and "illicit use of his image".

Of course, this invocation of French privacy law to protect Maxwell from public scrutiny is the most ingenious argument yet against the introduction of privacy legislation in the UK. But one wonders how on earth this squares with Cap'n Bob's own attitude towards those unfortunates — including junior members of the royal family in mid-urination — who have had their notional privacy invaded by hacks on the *Daily Mirror*, *Sunday Mirror*, or *The People*. "Respect for private life is one of the components of personal liberty," says the writ from Maxwell's French lawyers.

THE Surrey Union Hunt is suing downhill skier Stuart Wilkie and two local newspapers for libel over allegations that members of the hunt cut off the tail of a cub before throwing the live animal to the hounds — a practice that contravenes the code of the Masters of Foxhounds Association.

Wilkie wrote a letter about the alleged incident, which apparently took place on National Trust land, to the *Dorking Advertiser*. This was followed up by the *Surrey Mail*, which published a feature on Wilkie's activities outside sport. The Surrey Union Hunt has issued libel writs against both papers as well as against Wilkie as an individual.

In support of his case Wilkie has five sworn affidavits from persons who claim to have been present and to have witnessed the barbarous act, and also several affidavits from people who claim to have witnessed such an event on previous occasions. At the same time, the hunt has 15 affidavits on its side denying the story.

Although the hunt's action against the *Dorking Advertiser* has supposedly been settled, the *Surrey Mail* is holding out. Wilkie, who has insufficient funds to engage in litigation, is being supported by the West Surrey Green Party.

campain

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Contributor: Michael Harding
(This advert is genuine and appears in various computer magazines – Ed)

All dismal advertising gratefully received.

EYE TV

The Berlin Wall

——— (All channels) ———

EVERY really senior British television executive keeps, locked in a wall-safe, the pamphlets which list the procedures to be followed in the event of the death of a major member of the royal family or the onset of nuclear war. It is believed that both approaches broadly involve a phone call to David Dimbleby (or Jonathan, if he's out) and the playing of dull classical music against an ice-blue caption card.

What is less well known is that a similar document exists delineating the treatment of great historical news stories. However, the coverage of the recent dismantling of the Berlin Wall establishes beyond doubt that there is an organised procedure so rigid in practice that even the Crucifixion would have been covered by British television as follows:

1) All news programmes would have been extended by 20 or 30 minutes to allow the same shot of the three crosses to be shown over and over again.

2) *Panorama*, *World In Action* and *This Week* would have cancelled the programmes on which they had been spending time and money for several months to present lengthy documentary profiles of Pontius Pilate. Each profile would have concluded that he was "a man about whom little is known".

3) For a week-long period, all radio programmes would have been presented live from Jerusalem, although a foreign studio sounds exactly the same as one anywhere else.

4) The former Roman foreign secretary — Davidus Owenus — would have appeared on different channels at 10-minute intervals saying the same thing. A presenter sitting in London would have conducted interviews with another presenter "standing live now on the actual sight of Golgotha". The interviews would have contained exchanges like: "Bob, what are the implications of this for Christianity?"/"Christianity hasn't started yet, John."

5) Michael Ignatieff, for *The Late Show*, would have made a sensitive film in which he interviewed leading Pharisee poets and scholars and "tried to understand the strong and complicated emotions which have driven a community to this appalling act of violence".

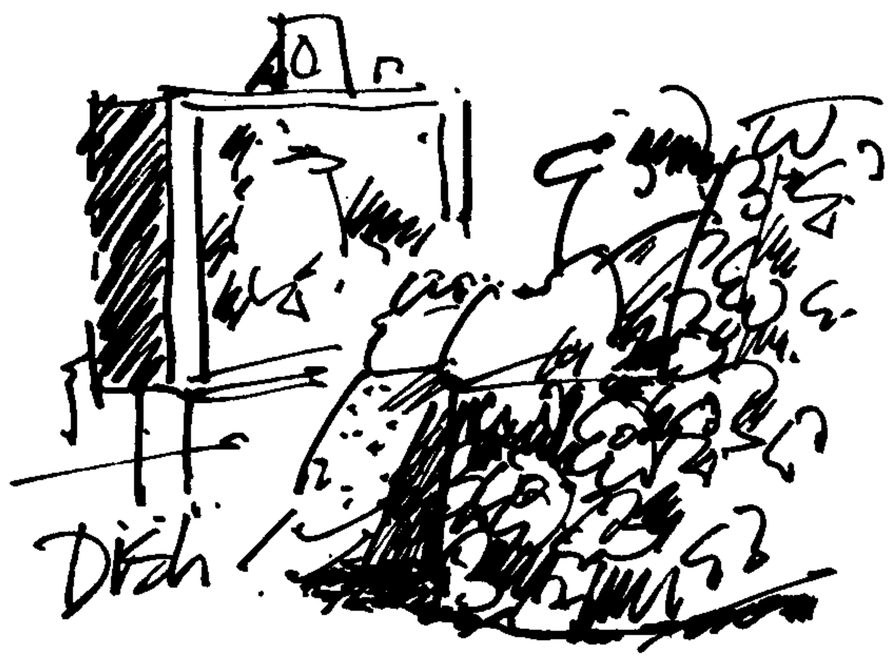
6) Robert Kilroy-Silk would have presented exclusive interviews with Mary Magdalene and Barabbas The Robber.

The difficulty is a confusion which has built up in the minds of current affairs producers between history and a story. A story can be of merely quotidian significance, but there can be a considerable amount to be reported and analysed on the single day when it matters; an example might be a political resignation or a United Nations resolution.

By contrast, history (like the recent events at the Berlin Wall) is certain to be set as a question in the GCSE exams of Peter Sissons' and Martyn Lewis' grandchildren but may — on the day when it is, coincidentally, also a story — provide little more genuine visual or verbal material than pictures of joyous celebrations and a brief retrospective account of the creation of what has just been dramatically changed. The rest is hysteria.

The desperate flights to Berlin by the world's reporters — kicking and rank-pulling their way on to packed planes in some sick parody of a refugee exodus — and the flatulent cross-examinations which they conducted on their arrival are a product of this confusion. If a story is as huge as this, the reasoning goes, then television must cover it hugely. It isn't always true. In times like those we have just lived through, television runs the risk — in a dark reversal of the art of the fire-side storyteller from which the medium is very distantly descended — of boring a people with its own history. The Berlin events were a few great pictures trivialised by the week-long wind which was swirled around them. To paraphrase Pink Floyd, all in all, it was just another prick on the Wall.

"Brian — live in front of the Brandenburg Gate — any new developments since we last joined you?"



"For those with black and white – Mrs Thatcher has a red face"

"Not really, John. The extraordinary pace of progress which we have witnessed in these last historic days seems to have slowed for the moment."

"Rumours here, Brian, of another historic breach in the wall shortly."

"I'm not in a position to confirm or deny that, John. Although, certainly, the pace of activity of the border guards standing behind me does seem to have noticeably quickened in the last few moments."

"Brian, thank you. With me in the studio to discuss these historic developments are..."

'Square Eyes'

MEDIA NEWS

SOME of the good, environmentally concerned burghers of Cheltenham have been getting rather steamed up in recent weeks over the issue of satellite dishes.

These are not of course those dishes to be seen on the roof of GCHQ, but Sky dishes that a tiny number of residents have dared to stick on to their period Georgian frontages.

To mumblings of "eyesore", "conservation area" and "legal action", Sky's response has been innovative. "We're working on a sandstone-coloured version," said a Murdoch mouthpiece.

TV HACKS at the BBC are in revolt against haughty Polly Toynbee, head of the immensely expensive social affairs unit set up by John Birt.

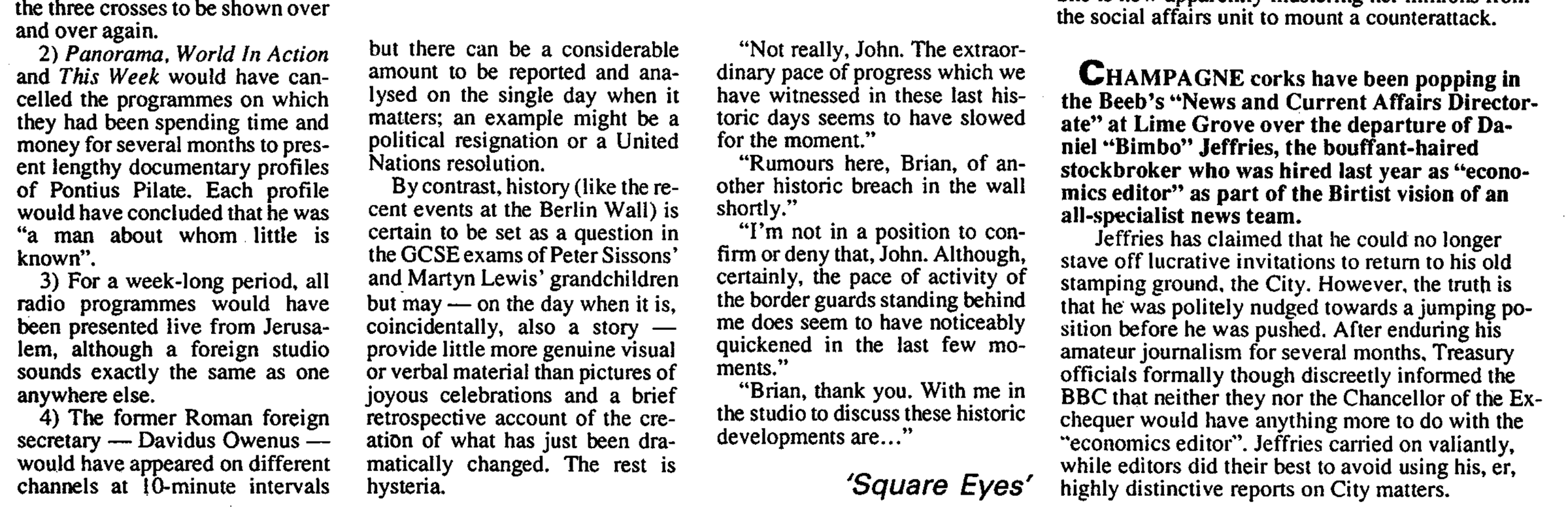
La Toynbee, who sought to emulate the lifestyle of her husband — the *Indescribablyboring*'s Garrick Club lunch correspondent — by insisting on a chauffeur-driven limo to drive her about town, has taken to delegating her stories for the *One O'Clock News* and *Six O'Clock News* to lowly hacks while hogging the prestigious 9pm slot for herself.

Things recently came to a head over the ambulance drivers' strike. Hyperactive hackette Carole Walker had spent a day rushing between strike meetings, press conferences and interviews with ambulance officials, only to find La Toynbee had ordered the *Nine O'Clock* editors to stand by for her descent from Olympus to do a special report on the subject.

This provoked angry scenes in the newsroom. A deputation of news reporters complained bitterly to Ian Hargreaves, controller of news and current affairs. Delicate manipulation of daily news coverage was arranged and La Toynbee was bumped. She is now apparently mustering her minions from the social affairs unit to mount a counterattack.

CHAMPAGNE corks have been popping in the Beeb's "News and Current Affairs Directorate" at Lime Grove over the departure of Daniel "Bimbo" Jeffries, the bouffant-haired stockbroker who was hired last year as "economics editor" as part of the Birtist vision of an all-specialist news team.

Jeffries has claimed that he could no longer stave off lucrative invitations to return to his old stamping ground, the City. However, the truth is that he was politely nudged towards a jumping position before he was pushed. After enduring his amateur journalism for several months, Treasury officials formally though discreetly informed the BBC that neither they nor the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have anything more to do with the "economics editor". Jeffries carried on valiantly, while editors did their best to avoid using his, er, highly distinctive reports on City matters.


CORPORATION STREET W.12
An everyday story of Broadcasting Folk
"WHAT'S UP, OAPs?" BAB
BBC BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING IN PROGRESS
"WELL, JACOBS, WHY ARE YOU GOING TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF MAKING PROGRAMMES FOR OLD FOLK...
PRIMETIME
TO CONVINCE THEM THEY SHOULD DRESS LIKE KIDS...
THINK LIKE ADOLESCENTS ...
AND DO THE JOBS YOUNGSTERS SHOULD BE DOING ...
WHEN WE'VE ALREADY GOT JANET STREET-PORTER DOING IT FOR US!"
BAR
"Treble sanatogens and Heads of Yoof all round!"
KenPyne

MEDIA NEWS (2)

VETERAN BBC hack Christopher Morris, who now works at Sky TV, spent October on holiday in the US with the new love of his life, fellow Skyperson and ex-*Daily Mail* hackette Suzanne O'Shea. (O'Shea is in her mid-twenties; Morris rather over 50.) His idea was that the jaunt would pay for itself since O'Shea would send back "voice commentaries" on American stories for Sky's breakfast show, *Sunrise*.

Unfortunately Morris neglected to find out whether this idea appealed to Sky. Back in London, he discovered that most of the 40-plus "stories" he sent back across the Atlantic were not used because Sky's foreign desk deemed O'Shea's voice "unacceptable".

Gallantly indignant on behalf of his young friend, Morris has fired off a memo to the producer of *Sunrise*, Jonathan Warner, registering "my own strong protest at what seems to have been the shoddiest of treatment for a Sky staff reporter showing initiative and enthusiasm whose only reward has been a kick in the teeth. I also take offence as the producer of all the stories she filed which I carefully monitored each night from NBC and CBS coverage." (This is a rather grand way of saying that he watched the television news in America.)

"It is hardly encouraging," he continues, "for an experienced staff reporter of Miss O'Shea's ability to find herself in the present invidious position. She is understandably upset and angry. So am I."

His parting shot is to suggest that the channel's unwillingness to use his girlfriend's commentaries "is hardly adding credibility to Sky's foreign coverage which has, as you know, been the subject of some press criticism."

FACT: No press criticism has yet singled out the lack of reports from Suzanne O'Shea as Sky's major weakness.

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

CORBY

SINISTER tidings from hyper-secretive Corby, Northamptonshire's phoenix steel town where Labour Party rule is absolute.

Corby's economy has been transformed since its 12,000 steelworkers lost their jobs in the early 1980s and is seen by Thatch as a jewel in the free enterprise crown. Its success of course is due in no small part to the £400 million of public money poured into it — and to the iron grip of Commisar Kelvin Glendenning OBE, the council leader, and his henchmen whose business zeal and love of secrecy has out-Toried even the Tories.

In the interests of free and frank discussion, the administration — 23 Labour and just four opposition councillors — signed a non-aggression pact with the local rag to avoid unfavourable publicity. And just in case anything should slip out, the council does much of its business with press and public excluded.

Thus it was that no one was on hand to report a meeting of the property management sub-committee in August when Mr Glendenning finally declared his interest in one of Corby's biggest property owners — the company of rough-diamond millionaire David Hamblin, who has interests in everything from betting shops and estate agencies to garages, shops, real estate and finance companies. Mr Hamblin owns a sizeable slice of Corby's multi-million pound town centre and his name cropped up as one of three firms bidding for a plot of land earmarked for leisure development.

Mr Glendenning, a former steelworker who drives a Hamblin car (said to be on permanent loan) and was seen enjoying Hamblin hospitality at Haydock Park last year, rightly declared his interest and left the meeting. Thus he would not have been involved in discussing the Hamblin bid of £481,000 for the land at Phoenix Parkway which fell midway between a bid of £300,000 from a firm called Grosvenor and another for £600,000 from Portals.

According to the council, Hamblin and the others were then given time to revise their different — and secret — submissions and bids. Portals and Grosvenor declined; Hamblin brilliantly revised his upwards — to £625,000! The council agreed to sell him the land last week. Whatever can it all mean?

CUNNIGHAME

MAD COW disease has finally spread to the human race. Proof comes from the Ayrshire town of Irvine, where all sane political debate about poll tax and the like has been overshadowed by the following burning question: which local worthy urinated up against the listed Seagate Castle during Marymass?

Marymass is an annual festival with religious origins in which bigwigs and others from the Cunninghame district march on to the moors above Irvine and celebrate by drinking several glasses of sparkling highland mineral water.

This year one man broke away from the return procession to commit the heinous crime of relieving himself up against the ruined castle.

In Irvine, the matter is not only the subject of debate by district Labour councillors, but it has attracted scores of column inches of comment in local newspapers who call loudly for the culprit to reveal himself — more discreetly, this time — and make a public apology.

Could all the fuss have something to do with the man's esteemed position in the town? Lord Gnome is not sure. The only thing that is sure is that unless the respected Mr James Clements, Justice of the Peace and Cunninghame Labour councillor, makes some kind of statement on his behaviour during this year's festival he will surely be known as the Marymass slasher for ever more.

MANCHESTER

THE metropolitan county councils may have vanished, but their legacy lingers on. Nowhere more so than in Manchester, where the former county council has been wound down by the Greater Manchester residuary body which, over the last few months, has been busily disinvesting itself of all its worldly goods and dividing them between local councils.

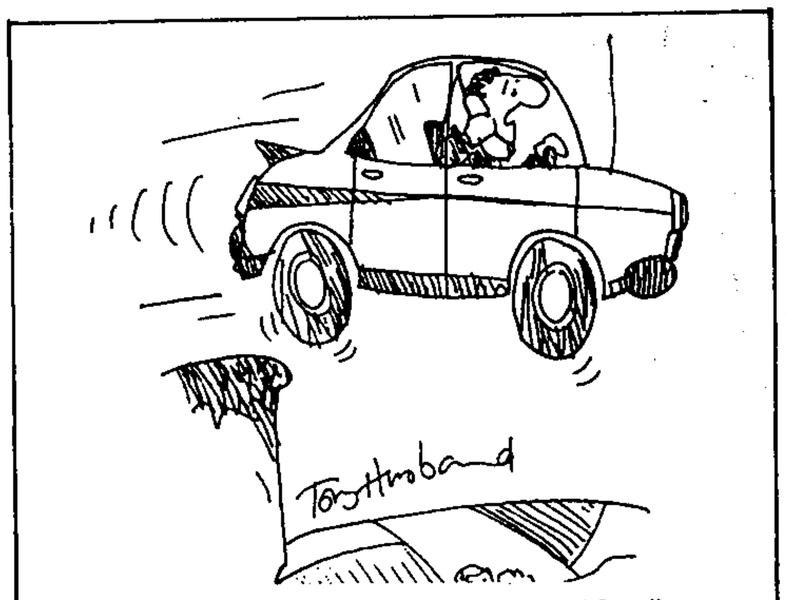
The councils, such as Labour-run Manchester, are keen to see the residuary body receive the best prices for sales, especially when the land is being sold to wealthy property developers. But an obscure 400-acre site in Tyldesley, Wigan, known as Gin Pit, is causing many raised eyebrows.

Until 1974 Gin Pit was an NCB colliery. It was then sold to the fledgeling Gtr Manchester council which spent £3.5 million of public money restoring it with the aim of building a leisure park and golf course. The council persuaded the EEC into spending a further £2.5 million to complete the project. As far as the Eurocrats are concerned, Gin Pit is now Tyldesley Golf Course.

Unfortunately, not a lot of work took place. The bare expanse is still covered with 1½ inches of coal shale and has earned itself the local nickname "The Tyldesley Prairie". Last August the residuary body, which took up ownership of the land from the old county council, sold Gin Pit to ambitious local developers, Peel Holdings, for £260,000.

Peel, owners of the lucrative Manchester Ship Canal Company, says it wants the land for grazing despite the inhospitable top soil. But concerned locals unearthed some interesting information when they began making inquiries.

The residuary body first claimed that the sale of this presumably valuable piece of land, on which millions of pounds of public money had been spent, was advertised only in the *Farmers' Guardian*. This resulted in 50 responses, the best



"Hello, I'd like to report an accident"

of which, for a site worth around £7 million, was apparently Peel's!

But the residuary body later admitted that the sale had been conducted by a rural land agency, based in Clitheroe, 50 miles from Gtr Manchester, following advertisements placed in the similarly out-of-town *Preston Guardian*!

It also appears that Peel is keen to buy up empty land in the Wigan area. It recently offered the local rugby club £2 million for its plot and is believed to be drawing up a planning application to put to Wigan council to build houses on Gin Pit within the next two years.

However, behind the respectability of Peel Holdings lies the sinister shadow of Manchester city council which has a majority of directors on Peel's most notable asset, the Manchester Ship Canal. Last year the councillor-directors, keen to maximise canal profits, struck a complex and potentially lucrative development deal with Peel.

Of course, no one is suggesting that Manchester and the other local councils failed to haggle for a decent price for Gin Pit because they were content with the lure of future prospects, but locals are wondering how Peel Holdings managed to acquire such a huge swathe of development land on a prime greenfield site, close to motorways and intercity rail networks, for a pittance?

BIRMINGHAM

RUMOURS of a highly embarrassing gay sex scandal which have been bubbling away for months within Birmingham city council seem set finally to boil over.

In the municipal corridors of power talk of "rentboys on the rates" and of regular jolly rogering sessions centred around a senior official and a senior councillor is now at fever pitch.

No one in the enlightened council is objecting to the men's sexual orientation — simply to the fact that together they are seen to form part of a hard-drinking "gay mafia" that wields undue power, influence and preferrment in a high profile area of council activity.

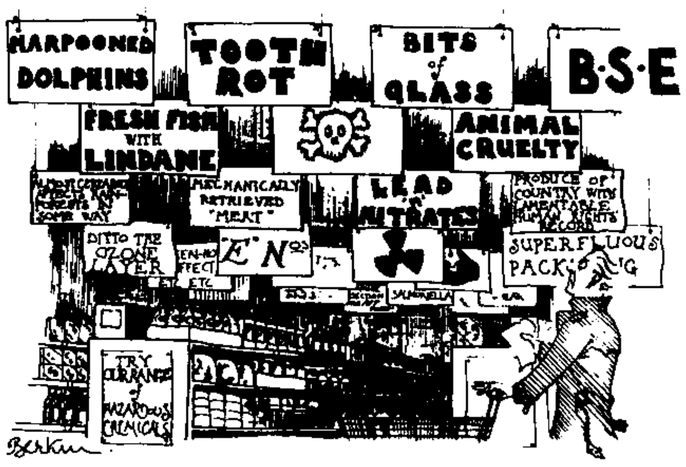
What is also worrying those in the council — both elected members and employees — is that unusual "Friday afternoon garden parties" are alleged to have involved paid participants and to have taken place in council time and on council property.

There is even talk of Inspector Knacker becoming involved.

Rumours of the exotic Ugandan practices on the rates are now so loud they have even reached the dozy hacks at the local *Evening Mail* where the story is being sat upon.

Watch this space.

DOWN ON THE FARM



with 'Old Muckspreader'

OLD MUCK has been calling the common agricultural policy (CAP) "a major criminal conspiracy" for some time, so back at the Muck family seat in East Anglia one was thrilled when our brave agriculture secretary concurred and denounced part of the food industry as "a major criminal conspiracy". But it was still a limp comment by John Gummer.

The Dutch corporation with the wonderful title of SLUMP has just lost an expensive civil — not criminal — case against its customers who had complained that cattle fodder laced with zinc and lead poisoning was not very ethical and probably not very tasty.

The Netherlands farmers' union Landbouschap, which makes our NFU look like a bunch pussycats, has declared SLUMP an enemy of the people and suggested that if the company does not pay large sums in amicable compensation it will be driven into the sea.

Of course 1989 has been a grim year for cows and their owners. They found a whole new disease which is hitting the marketing of the entire cattle flesh trade. Bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) is in fact a parody of the CAP: the cows cannot control their limbs and actions and, just like the Berleymont bureaucrats, have to be put down.

The UK is being treated as a leper by her European partners. The Germans have banned all trade in British beef and offal. Mr Gummer is bravely asking the Irish to intervene on our behalf with the commission and this has caused much needed laughter in Brussels.

Hacks meanwhile are claiming that BSE is about to "leap the species" from quadrupeds to us. I think we can be more sanguine. The principle is simple: if the European Commission says it's dangerous it is harmless; if it says something is virtuous it is usually "a major criminal conspiracy".

THE NUMBER of goats in the UK is now so great that the European Commission has decided it is time to count them all. Brussels will thus undertake a goat census costing, according to a European parliamentary question, £680,000. As there are only reckoned to be 122,000 goats in the UK, this looks like a nice little earner.

But the commission does not just give out cushy jobs to its chums. There does seem to be an undercurrent of British subversion in the goat trade. Because goats are not controlled and contained by the marketing boards and interventionary agents, there is alarm that goats milk and cheese is going to disrupt the Stalinist delusions of the quota-brokers.

Goat keepers in the UK seem to be a literate and argumentative bunch on the practical wing of the green movement. I predict the winner of the goat-counting contract will come to wish he was counting sheep.

GREAT celebrations in Portugal over the EC's new regulation for preserving sardines. The species "Sardina pilchardus Walbaum" Combined Nomenclature Codex Alimentarius 1604.20.50 is now safe from lesser sprats. The Danes had contested the Portuguese definition of a sardine, but they were outvoted.

The only people to lose out are the ones who do not matter — the consumers. As Moroccan and other oceanic suppliers of sardines play dirty and offer the same foodstuffs at half the price, the commissioners have ruled, bless them, that they must be blocked.

Readers may be pleased and reassured that the EC has also connived at a new threshold of only 25 per cent minimum sardine content in "sardine" products. This was the British contribution to the deliberations in Brussels. We are told our man from MAFF was called Sandy Jardine, but we suspect we were being teased.

Sporting Life

ALL manner of bizarre characters were lurking around the Breeder's Cup meeting at Gulfstream Park in Florida. Heading the cast was a fearsome trainer from Pulborough who, according to one local announcer, was 'Gar' Harwood.

The tremendous Gar hadn't done too well on his previous forays across the Atlantic so this time he left his flat cap and barbour in Sussex and went native in a baseball cap. However, there was no question of him adopting the US trainers' policy of open accessibility to the press. Around the corner D. Wayne Lukas, looking more than ever like a walking advert for Ralph Lauren, was conducting his usual daily seminar for visiting journalists. The hapless English hacks, ordered by patriotic editors to concentrate on the domestic angle, fared less well with Gar. After queuing up in the sun for almost two hours at a time they were rewarded with such standard Harwood gems as "We won't make a decision until tomorrow..." "We won't really know until the race" and "I can't really talk about that" etc.

Of equal curiosity to the locals were the two strange men in suits. (Which is not a reference to the well coiffed Cubans, one of whom looked suspiciously like John Francome with boot polish on, who appeared to be impromptu minders of the Andre Fabre horses.) These were none other than Mike Dillon of Ladbroke's and Wally Pyrah of Coral's. Come the big day, the pair were installed in a special room in the grand stand where they were able to shovel large amounts of dollars and pounds into the American PMU betting system. This had the unfortunate effect that their clients back home were faced with an even more ridiculously short starting price for the likes of the ill-fated Zilzal than would've otherwise obtained.

Trying to set a very different tone were those two permanently perplexed looking senior officials: Tristram Ricketts, of the Levy Board, and Peregrine Hartington, senior steward of the Jockey Club. Neither was having any truck with Gar Harwood's flirtation with informality — despite the 85^0 temperatures and extreme humidity.

The bold Tristram turned up at the gallops at 7 am in grey flannel trousers, jacket and tie. A few hours later he dashed back to his hotel — presumably to change into a dinner jacket for a relaxing pool-side breakfast. As for Lord H he was able to watch the racing from the comfort of a table in the Orchid Room at the top of the clubhouse.

While most of the other diners revelled in the cocktails and the tropical setting, Peregrine sat stoically through the entire proceedings in a thick grey worsted suit that would've been perfect for Newbury in January. Not even the air-conditioning could save him. By the end of the day he looked as if he'd been basking in a sauna. Sometimes it's tough being an Englishman abroad...

'Major Bonkers'

Sally Deedes

WAY BACK in the 1960s, London Transport started to line the tunnels and platforms on the Underground with melamine bonded panels and corrugated bitumen and asbestos sheets. It completed the job as recently as 1987. Now it is taking them all down again — at a proposed cost of £200 million over the next five years.

The lining was introduced to give a more attractive finish to the cast iron tunnels which had always been beset with water and stalactite problems. Corrugated bitumen and asbestos sheets were inserted between the cast iron tunnel rings, and the white plastic panels were placed on top both to catch the drips and act as a cosmetic finish. They also reduced the already narrow platforms by nine inches.

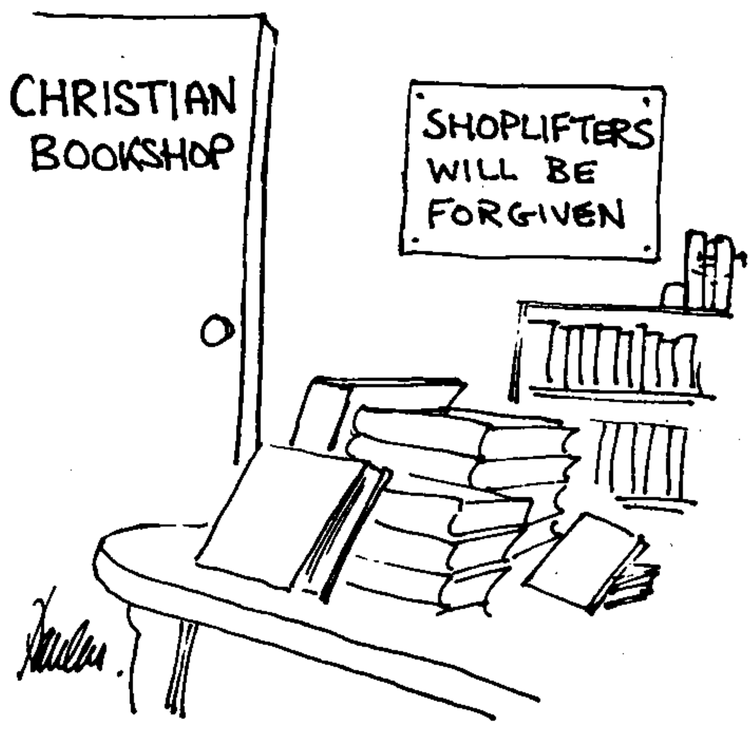
After the severe fire at Oxford Circus in 1984 it became clear to LRT management that something was severely amiss with its tunnel linings. The management therefore introduced the hastily conceived idea of fire breaks in the ceiling. These consisted of double metal sheets placed 40ft apart on platforms, though not on escalator ceilings. Whether these would have worked is questionable since the panels quickly buckle and drop out of their clips in a fire.

The fire breaks were only an interim measure, as a new tunnel lining was on the drawing board prior to the King's Cross fire. On Euston station's platform 1, the prototype of vitreous enamelled steel and granite tiles was approved by LRT management in January 1988 as a model for its reconstruction plan.

So how did LRT come to use the materials in the first place? What tests had the plastic and bitumen panels undergone before installation? Neither Boreham Wood (now the Loss Prevention Council) nor the Fire Research station in Warrington had been consulted. A spokesman for LRT said: "The material passed the British code of practice standard" — ie the BS476 test which only deals with flame spread. "No organic plastic" he told me "will pass a toxicity and smoke test, and the fire at Oxford Circus proved that bitumen and asbestos placed in ceiling cavities lost all their fire resistant qualities." Surely this would have been apparent before installation; so why was it used at all? "It was all that was available," I was told.

Such information rather contradicts the claim made by Lionel Read, London Underground's QC at the King's Cross inquiry, that Tube passengers must "not think they are walking through a major fire hazard at stations".

Under the heading "Lessons from earlier fires", the Fennel report criticised LRT's approach to safety as being re-active rather than pro-active. And its five-year stripping programme (London Underground was rather vague on this — the official time limit fell from 10 years to five during the writing this article) seems positively leisurely when, according to the pathology department of a leading London hospital, the smoke from the melamine/bitumen combination can be lethal within three minutes.



Letters

Tourist trap

Sir,

Reunification of Germany

Don't the British realise the full implications if Germany reunifies — now we'll never be able to get a sunbed in Spain or Greece after 5.00am.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN McGEE,
Birkenhead, Merseyside.

Railroaded

Sir,

Your coverage of Channel Tunnel matters would earn more respect if you did not come out with ludicrous statements, such as British Rail "is the only railway in the world that has never built a railway line". Among the entirely new railways that BR has built within the last few years are an underground system in Liverpool, a main line between Doncaster and York (to avoid subsidence in the Selby coalfield) and a link between the railways north and south of Manchester. A branch line into Stansted Airport is under construction at the moment. These are just a few examples.

I wonder if you realise the extent to which BR has been manipulated by the government that is unwilling to provide financial support. The half-baked alternative high speed rail routes through Kent were rushed out in order to boost confidence in the Channel Tunnel and inflate the share price at a time when things were not looking good. What has happened since is surely Thatcher's revenge for not having a drive-through road tunnel.

Yours,
NEVILLE HILL,
Bristol.

Powergen

Sir,

Piloti

If Mrs Thatcher is as barking mad as your cover of issue 728 would have us believe, she is a monument to realism and sanity when compared with your anonymous "architectural" critic Piloti on page nine.

All critics eventually succumb to their own over-used critical faculties and Piloti turns out to be no exception. He or she raves on about, of all things, Battersea power station: "This great Temple of Power once stood for modern architecture and progress". What ballsaching crap.

He or she can rave on as much as they want but nothing will reverse the fact that Battersea power station is an appalling, out-of-scale eyesore. Its adornment with four amazing phalluses merely completes the architectural joke; one of them only ever served a cosmetic purpose anyway.

There may be a use for it advertising Tampax, or perhaps cigarettes — who knows. It would be appropriate. But I warrant that if plans were drawn up today to put a building like that in central London, there would be a horrified outcry from anyone who ever reads the Guardian, appeals to the Royal Fine Arts Commission, carbuncle noises from the Prince of Wales and Piloti would go bananas.

If Piloti in his/her dotage has fallen in love with power stations as architectural masterpieces, why not sing a song of Ferrybridge, or maybe rhapsodise about Berkeley? Anyone for Sizewell? At least they have all been built out there in the country, away from the gaze of most of us. There they can receive the rapt admiration of power station enthusiasts like Piloti, while the rest of us concentrate on cities as places to encourage human scale development. Is that not what the rows about Paternoster Square, Palumbo, Richard Rodgers and Hammerstein have been all about?

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTOPHER MEAKIN,
London SE21.

Just Fancy That

Sir,

Now that John Major will be using a more intimate form of address to the Prime Minister, has he been warned that "Maggie" contains within it the entire leadership philosophy: I GAG 'EM?

Private Eye, 10-11-89

★ **ONE of Mrs Thatcher's Cabinet colleagues points out how neatly the name Maggie forms the anagram I GAG 'EM.**

Daily Mirror, 18-11-89

● *More anagrams next week – Ed.*

Stolen moments

Sir,

I think you're being too hard on Jeffrey Archer for "stealing" an idea originally used by an unknown writer Mrs Kathleen Burnett, in his collection of short stories, "A Twist in the Tale".

After all, poor Mr Archer has himself suffered the same shoddy treatment at the hands of a Mr Somerset Maugham.

Mr Maugham's short story "The Luncheon" was an almost exact copy of one of Mr Archer's in the collection "A Quiver Full of Arrows".

Who is this scoundrel? I think we should be told.

Yours etc,
G. BLAKE (MRS),
Cadiz, Spain.

Swan upping

Sir,

Your article "Eye Short Story: A Twist in the Tale" issue 27.10.89 echoes Daphne du Maurier's short story "The Old Man" which featured a swan, as opposed to a cat, in the Archer alleged plagiarism. In all other respects the story was much the same. Miss du Maurier's story was published in 1952 I understand.

By the way, today's 5.45 ITN News described John Major as the Foreign Secretary. We should be told!?!

Yours faithfully,
G.H. TAYLOR,
Warfield, Berkshire.

P.S. Congrats on Bananaballs!

Gutter swipe

Sir,

Your "Twist in the Tale" story (Eye 727) interested me greatly. While being reluctant to defend so vile an individual as Jeffrey Archer, I can confirm that the idea of "cat as narrator" has been used before. My father, currently a journalist for the Belfast Telegraph, wrote such a story over 20 years ago and is now searching frantically in the attic for this "genuinely original idea". In his story the narrator is the victim of a hit and run accident lying in the gutter overnight and listening to the sounds from a nearby house where a child is being born. The identity of the story teller is only revealed when a street sweeper scoops him from the gutter the next morning. The story was called "Full Circle" by the way, just in case Mr Archer is incapable of thinking of his own titles either.

Yours sincerely,
PAUL MOORHEAD,
Belfast.

Bonemeal

Sir,

So Old Muckspreader has been laying it on thick about milk being good for brittle bone disease (Osteoporosis) in the elderly. I seem to recall a statement in a health organ asserting that the calcium content in the lait was rendered useless by the process of pasteurisation, calcium of course being the ingredient essential to bones. If I've got the facts right I think the old should be told.

Yours sincerely,
E. BRADSHAW (Miss Golditops),
Bearsden, Glasgow.

Arms for Allah

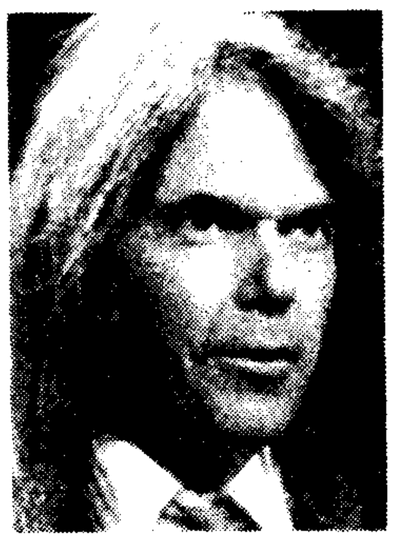
Sir,

Here is a simple quiz for your "staff".

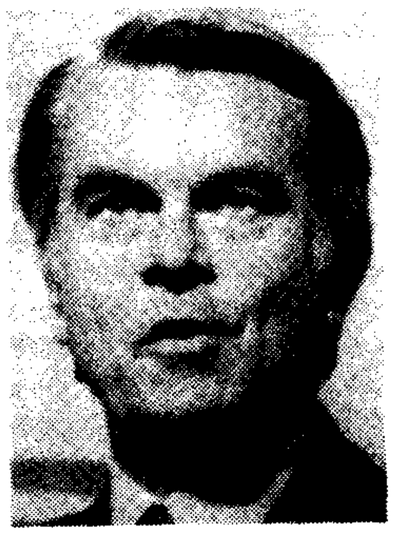
General Dynamics manufacture the F16, so why is McDonnell Douglas interested in selling it to the Saudis (Eye 728)? Is it because (a) Big Mac have decided GD's plane is superior to its own F15 fighter, or (b) your report is Lonrho-inspired shit. The 1990 Observer's Book of Aircraft is now available.

Yours,
SEAN ROTHMAN,
Wapping, London E1.

Lookalike



Owen



Young

Sir,

I wonder if any of your readers have noticed the striking resemblance between ageing rock supremo Neil Young and fading political supremo David Owen. I wonder if by any chance they could be related?

Yours sincerely,
ALAN BATTERSBY,
Ely, Cambs.

Waste matter

Sir,

As the NUM's "Unclear" Expert, I would like to add a comment to your article "Leak Soup" (Eye, 27 October 1989) on AGR decommissioning costs. The AGR reactors have a **higher power** *density than the Magnox types but because they are far bigger in output, they have a considerably larger volume of structural material around the cores. This means that the reactors contain and are surrounded by a massive amount of what is effectively intermediate level radio-active waste.*

As the rate of radio-active decay is exponential, this means that intermediate level waste, while still lethal, remains so for a much longer period of time. As your Correspondent correctly says, rad waste "disposal" is costed by volume and the estimated duration of radio-activity and, therefore, as the cost of AGR decommissioning will be considerably more than the £6.6 billion estimate for the Magnoxes. Some experts have put the AGR "back-end" cost at around £15 billion whilst others would say this could be a low estimate.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN PARKIN
(NUM Research Officer — writing in a personal capacity),
Sheffield.

I-SPY

Kuala Lumpur

Submitted by M.S. Davies. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

House holed

Sir,

Your report in Nooks and Corners on the Victorian houses 53-59 Belsize Avenue, London NW3 (Eye No 726) is incorrect.

Because the previous owner was running these properties so appallingly and the tenants were suffering as a result, Camden Council served a Control Order, removed the most immediate health and safety risks, and held numerous consultation meetings with the residents until they were all satisfactorily housed in council accommodation.

The Control Order was followed up with a Compulsory Purchase Order. We felt confident we had the necessary financial resources because we planned to complete a back-to-back deal with a Housing Association which would have ensured that the houses remained available to meet housing need at affordable rents.

We were therefore horrified when our Chief Engineer's report showed that the houses were unstable, and would have to be demolished.

It was subsequently hoped to build low cost housing on the site, but the severe and increasing Government restrictions on local authority spending prevented us from proceeding. Housing Associations are similarly prevented from providing housing on such expensive sites at cheap rents, as they must now be substantially dependent on private finance. The only option left is to offer the site for sale to the private sector. At least the money raised will help our underfunded rehabilitation programme.

Yours faithfully,
COUNCILLOR JACKY PEACOCK,
Chair of Housing, Camden Council.

Brain damaged

Sir,

A Vet Writes, Eye 728, p19.

You incorrectly describe **Mad Cow Disease** *as Bovine Spongieform* **Enteritis**. *An understandable confusion as enteritis is associated with excessive faecal production, an unrelated but common symptom of the Mad Cow and her herd.*

The affliction you describe is Bovine Spongieform Encephalitis.

Yours faithfully,
A. PRION,
Vauxhall, London SE11.

Miss take

Sir,

Accusing Jools Holland of being inept in his presentation of Juke Box Jury is like accusing E.I. Addio of being inept in his reporting on the fortunes of Neasden FC.

Can't you thick shits recognise satire when you see it? — you write enough of the stuff yourselves.

Yours,
A. YOOF,
Worthing, Sussex.

His Master's Voice

Sir,

Hapless Gofer writes again.

B. Norris (who he?) is a cucumber; and, as usual, Acorn House is totally in the dark, to say nothing of at sea, up the creek, without a clue and altogether unhinged. The facts remain as previously stated (Eye 725).

Yours,
PETER JAY,
Pergamon Press, Headington Hill Hall, Oxford.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions.

"A momentary moment of slackness..."
BBC Radio Solent
(P.M. Mydlarz)

"I wouldn't pay a million pounds to be somewhere else tonight!"
Capital Gold football commentator
(D. Weir)

"There you can see Sunday Silence, who's hidden by another horse..."
BROUGH SCOTT, Channel 4
(A. Wright)

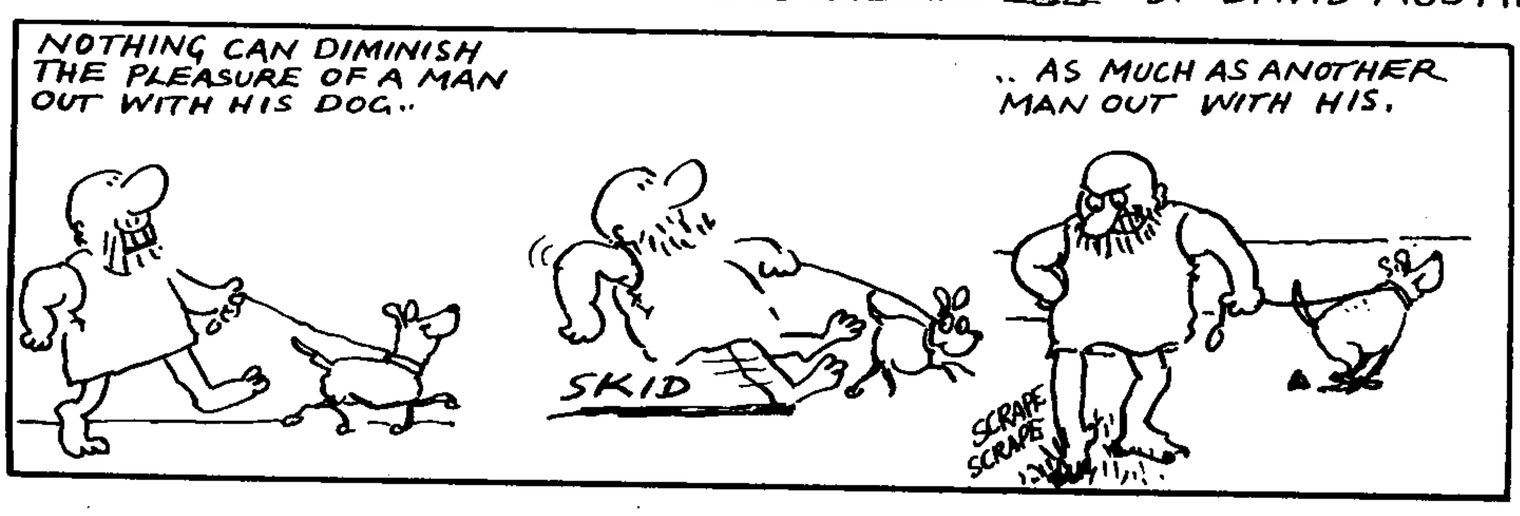
"Although a Canadian, Mario Martinez is, in fact, an Italian"
TED LOWE, BBC 2 Snooker
(J.C. Boaden)

"He comes at you rather like a fridge door opening with the light going on."
SIMON BATES, Radio 1

Plus all of JOHN MOTSON's commentary on AC Milan vs Real Madrid.
(D.J. Adams)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN



Letter from Singapore

from Our Own Correspondent

"I DON'T know what would happen to Singapore if we allowed *Private Eye* to circulate here," said Mr Lee Kuan Yew, whose government locks up satirists on the grounds that their activities are not in the national interest. He was speaking from the witness box in a libel action that has provided much-needed political entertainment in the world's most boring city.

Lee's libel actions are not normally contested for the very good reason that he always wins. He has abolished jury trial and appoints all the judges. Indeed, our new chief justice has not practised law for 20 years but happens to be a friend of the Prime Minister.

Appeals to the Privy Council in London have virtually been abolished after that august body of British law lords condemned the Singapore government and judiciary for wrongfully imprisoning Lee's main political opponent, Workers' Party leader Ben Jayaretnam.

Our tame local press is licensed by the Government and foreign publications which venture to publish criticisms are punished by having their circulation "restricted" to a few hundred copies. That is what happened to *The Far East Economic Review* when it lifted the lid on the government's real reasons for detaining 22 lawyers and Catholics in 1987 under the pretext that they were involved in a "Marxist plot". Additionally, Lee sued its editor, old Asia hand Derek Davies, for defamation.

Much to everybody's surprise Davies, instead of grovelling in order to retrieve circulation (like the editors of *Time* and *Asia Week*) actually appeared in the Lion City's legal den in order to defend the case. Lee was forced to suffer the indignity of a week's cross-examination, with a packed public gallery laughing at his evasions and embarrassments, undeterred by the presence of secret police or by the judge's admonitions that "this is a courtroom, not a theatre".

Lee has demanded aggravated damages for being laughed at, although many believe his predictably enormous award will be fixed by reference to the hallowed English principle that "the greater the truth, the greater the libel". The judgement is expected to throw a large pail of whitewash over Lee before he "steps up" from prime minister to executive president next year, allowing a brief interregnum by nonentity Goh Chok Tong before the dynastic succession of his son, BG ("Baby God") Lee. BG was one of the masterminds of the "Marxist plot" detentions and subsequently justified the ill-treatment of the detainees on the ground that "psychological pressure" was necessary to get them to confess.

The libel case produced material to add to the growing evidence that the detentions were in fact a frame-up of Guildfordesque proportions. Catholic activist Vincent Cheng and Law Society executive member Tao So Lung have been held in prison without trial for two and a half years thus far — the government has indicated that it will not release them so long as their fate remains of concern to international human rights organisations.

The Queen, however, did not allow such trifles to dim her unstinting praise for Lee on her stopover before opening the Commonwealth conference in Kuala Lumpur where human rights abuses in South Africa rather than Singapore were on the agenda. None of the British media hacks in her entourage seemed the slightest bit interested in visiting the notorious detention centre at Whitely Road.

Singaporeans must content themselves with happy memories of the Princess Royal, en route to refugee camps in Thailand, who was regaled by Lee Kuan Yew with his theories about selective breeding. After listening politely to his nonsense about the inheritance of intelligence (the basis for the government's efforts to matchmake graduates and deter breeding by those with low IQs), the regal Anne, herself possessor of one "O" level, turned on her heels and walked away declaring: "All I can say to you, prime minister, is that it doesn't work with horses."

10 Downing Street
Whitehall

Dear Bill,

Sorry you couldn't make it to the Halitosis Open Day on Tuesday. Not that you missed much. I only stayed long enough to see the Boss walking up the aisle with Pillock, which always makes me laugh. Having had a good snigger behind my hand, I managed to extricate myself from among the other distinguished strangers – the usual sweaty crush of coon emissaries – and sloped off to Annie's Bar as soon as H.M. put her specs on to read out the Boss's essay on What I Am Going To Do This Term.

Blow me, who should I find occupying the whole length of the bar but our erstwhile neighbour Fatty Lawson, cradling an enormous Brownie and in expansive mood. "Ah, Denis, you old piss-artist, couldn't face your little woman's pearls of wisdom, what? Can't say I blame you! The usual? A bucket of Gordon's for the gentleman, Doris, and go easy on the tonic!"

He told me I wouldn't believe what a relief it was not having to talk to "that ghastly old bat" any more. The sense of silence. Did I know what it was like, when the dentist gave you the pink water to drink and told you to rinse out, he'd see you in a fortnight when the bleeding had stopped? You know me, Bill; never one to look a free snort in the mouth, and I mumbled something about the Boss being a very remarkable woman.

At this our fat ex-Chancellor slapped me very hard on the back, gave a roar of laughter, and addressing the various no-hopers slumped at nearby tables, exclaimed "Poor old Foureyes! Hear what he said? 'Very remarkable woman!' That's pretty rich, I must say!" One particularly cherry-nosed old party – officially one of ours – thereupon blew his nose and said he'd always admired Margaret, but why didn't I have a word in her ear, she wouldn't listen to any of them, God knows they'd tried, and tell her Christmas was coming up, she'd done a marvellous job and so forth, why didn't she get out while she was ahead.

I don't think you'll consider I was disloyal, Bill, if I tell you I said I was very much in favour. Cut a long story short, I bought a few rounds, and we persuaded that very gloomy Old Etonian Cemeteryface Gilmour to do his duty for Queen and Country and put himself up for the Leadership. Lawson fell on the floor laughing, but we all agreed it was a jolly good idea. I think Gilmour had had a few, and after a bit of mock modesty said okay. Then he came back from the gents looking a bit worried. When he'd found his glass again we asked him what the trouble was. Bit of a snag; what if he won? At this there was more laughter, Lawson ordered quadruples all round, and Cemeteryface, still looking very gloomy, was persuaded to sign his name in blood.

I had a bit of a turn myself the other night. I'd been out to dinner with some East German businessman friend of Boris's and may have overimbibed, but for the life of me I couldn't get my latchkey into the keyhole at Number Ten. After a certain amount of scratching about the door was opened, and a little man with glasses came out and asked if he could help. For some reason I was convinced it was the man who comes round every week to spray disinfectant into the telephones. I was rather surprised to find him there in the middle of the night, and even more so when he offered me a drink.

Do you know, Bill, it got odder and odder. Hardly had he put a tumbler of Alka-Seltzer in my hand when a little woman bounced in in a frilly dressing gown and pom-pom slippers crying: "Do come upstairs, darling, I've hung the Green Lady over the mantlepiece in our bedroom and she looks really classy!" At this the Phonotas gent cleared his throat, straightened his specs, and said: "Darling, may I introduce our next-door neighbour, Mr Thatcher." In a flash all was revealed.

Boss had a pretty grisly weekend with the Euros, trying to put them straight on the Rolling Back of the Curtain. Her line was why, when intelligent Europeans beyond the Pale are throwing off the shackles of bureaucracy, should we be busily locking them on? Good deal of grave head-shaking from the assembled Euros who began to speak with tongues, trying to make Margaret feel she was some kind of idiot housewife with a shopping bag who had wandered in uninvited.

In answer to your enquiry about the Boy Mark, I am glad to say I have not seen him. I gather he flew in to London a week or so ago, and is staying at the Holiday Inn with a black butler called Otis and a large entourage of masseurs and accountants. Why old Beefburger puts up with it I can't imagine.

Yours at Twilight,

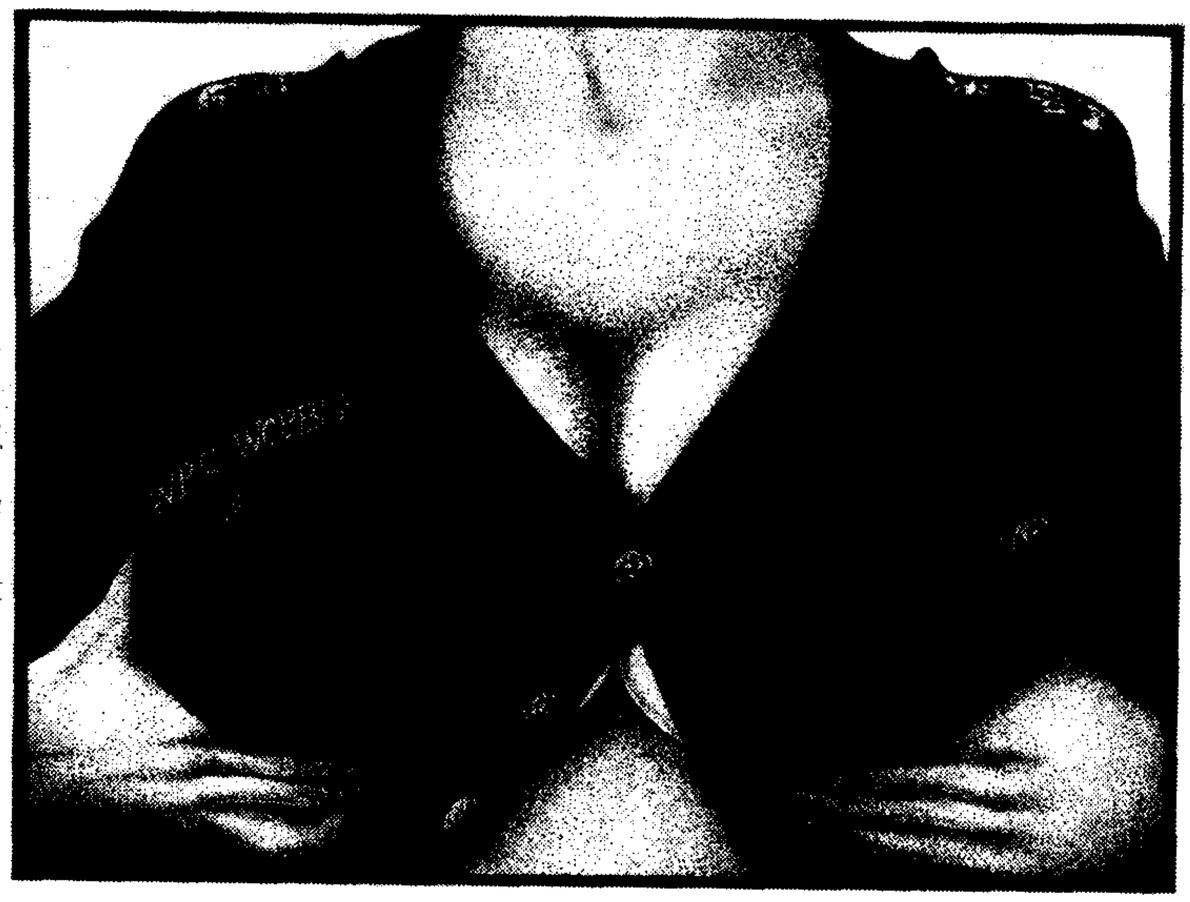
Denis

The new "Bill" book **NUMBER 10** is now on sale direct from *Private Eye*. See insert in middle pages.

CHRISTOPHER LOGUE'S

TRUE STORIES

ILLUMINATED BY BERT KITCHEN



IN HER announcement, Mrs Scilla Derwent-Crowther said: "I am resigning my position as chairman of Tenterden Town Council's Planning Committee in order to concentrate on astrology."

"AS AN undertaker I am accustomed to distressful scenes," said Mr Ranjain Pedesh of Pune, "but the events at the cremation of Mr Mita Charadas surpassed any in my experience.

"The trouble began in the Garden of Rest shortly after the ceremony when Indran, a brother of the deceased, declared that the three fields left to his sister had been intended for him. Hearing this, the sister threw Mr Charadas's ashes in her brother's face, and her husband Hadaspar Panras ran up and butted him in the stomach. Moments later, all 50-odd mourners were at it hammer and tongs. Several people had most of their clothes ripped from their backs. Plants were torn up out of the Garden's lawns and used as clubs. Finally the police took 16 people away."

"I COMBINE stripping and kissogramming," said Ms Mavis Hobb of Whetstane. "When ill health made my friend Bobbi Eagle cancel her engagement as a topless conjurette at an evening to raise money for the Hillsborough Disaster Fund, I took her place and went as WPC Wobble, arriving quite late, as told. At the given moment I jumped out from behind a curtain in full uniform, 'arrested' a good-looking but rather elderly man, tied him up in his chair, and took off his trousers and everything of mine except my g-string before I realised he was my mother's father, Councillor Gerrard Tonnis. As it was too late to go back, I decided to auction my uniform for the Fund. There were lots of bidders, we raised £350, and I got a lift home in a BMW."

Declining to comment on the evenings, Councillor Tonnis said: "I have seen quite enough of that Mavis Hobb."

COMMENTING on the fact that, while lighting a Paschal candle, he had set fire to his church treasurer's anorak "that melted, and part of it is still stuck to her son's ear", Rev Glyn Jones, vicar of Hyson Green, went on to say: "We are not an Anglo-Catholic parish and are unused to handling candles."

DURING his interview, Mr Peterkin Chimbi, chairman of the North Region Football Committee (Malawi), said: "We have banned Police Inspector F.W.D. Mainjeui from watching any game organised by us for 25 years, while his subordinates, Constables Dzoole and Chimvula, have each been given a seven-year ban.

"During the third round of the Kamuzu Cup, the Police found themselves 8-3 down while playing the Limbe Leaf Wanderers. Suddenly the inspector and his constables invaded the pitch and tried to arrest referee Stain Chilombo. But referee Chilombo was too quick for them. He vanished among the fans.

Not to be outdone, the inspector had the Wanderers' striker, Emmanuel Kamanga, arrested for giving an obscene sign. The striker was taken away and tortured for six hours."

A spokesman for the North Region police denied that Emmanuel Kamanga had been tortured. "He was made to sing the Police Federation marching song and to serve tea to Chief Inspector Lilonge," he said.

ACCUSED of having sex in a swimming pool with a girl "he had met only a few minutes before", Mr James Thurston, a nurse, denied that the three mentally handicapped swimmers he was meant to be supervising were "in any sense at risk, because the act only took about half a minute and I had my eye on them all the time."

INFORMATION: The Ashford Citizen 6.10.89; Navesind Times 30.8.89; Derbyshire Times 19.8.89; Church Times 22.9.89; Malawi News 12.8.89; Nursing Times 13.9.89.

MONITORS: Anon, Andrew B. McCloy, Daphne Hancock, G.F. Townson, A.J. Hawken, Trevor Howes.

A Doctor writes

As a doctor I am often asked nowadays: "Is *Punch* really going monthly?"

The simple answer is "yes".

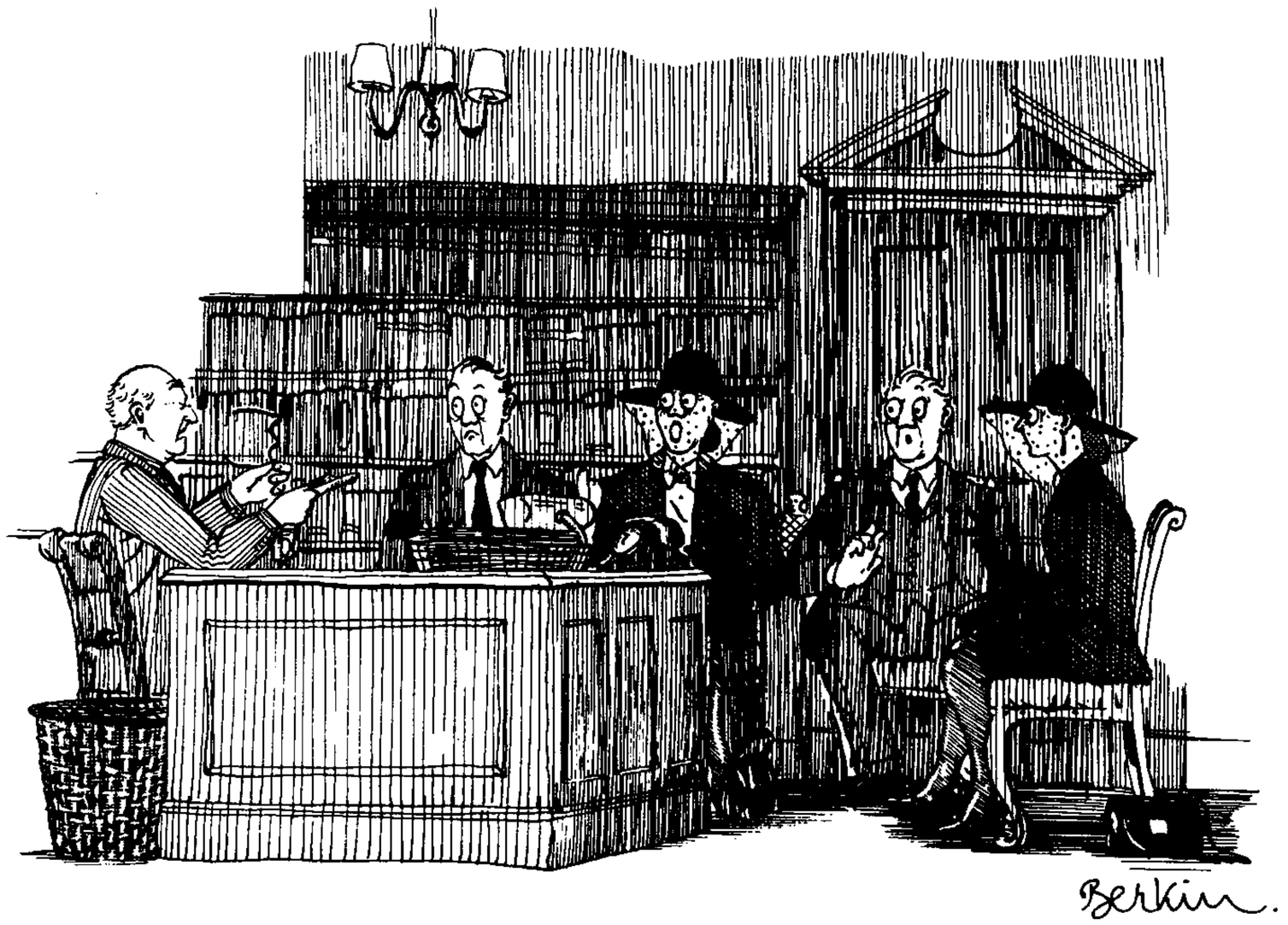
Because of the Government's new health reforms, doctors are responsible for their own budgets.

This that means expensive anaesthetic treatments such as *Punch* magazine (or Non-laughing gas, to give it its colloquial name) have to be rationed.

Due to these cuts, the availability of *Punch* is to be savagely reduced.

If you are worried about *Punch* you should see a psychiatrist at once.

© *A. Doctor. 1989*



"It seems that your father left his entire estate to the Duke of Westminster"

We tip the top 10 for Commons TV stardom

Mrs Thatcher (Tory)

Tough-talking, well-groomed, supremely confident speaker whose off-the-cuff jokes keep MP's rolling in the aisles.

★ *Eye rating: Two stars*

Neil Kinnock (Lab)

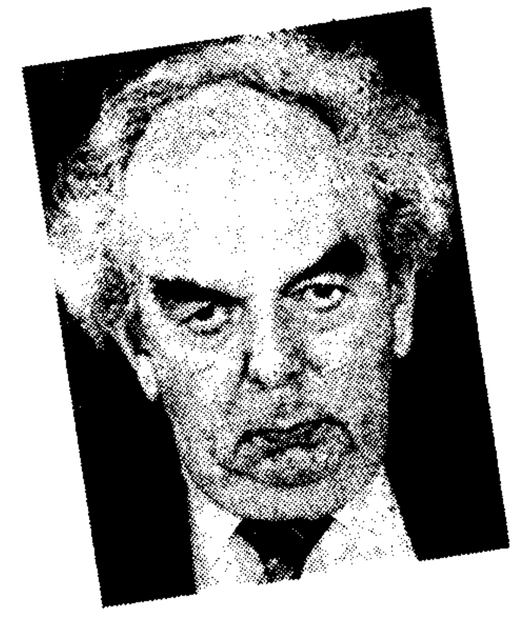
Terse down-to-earth Welshman who never uses two words where 412 will do. Noted for his mastery of economics and his put-downs of the Prime Minister.

★ *Eye rating: No stars*

Sir Bufton Tufton (Tory)

Bluff, no-nonsense Tory backbencher who is never afraid to say just what he thinks — e.g. "Mrs Thatcher is wonderful." The authentic voice of the Tory arse-roots *(surely grarsh rootsh? WD)*

★ *Eye rating: Five stars*



Sir Russell Bussell (Lib-Dem)

Elder statesman of the new Soc-Lib-Dem-Flop party. Urbane, boring, frequently asleep, Sir Russell is a master of parliamentary invective – e.g. "The Rt. Hon member's flies are undone."

★ *Eye rating: Ten stars*

Austin Rover (Lab)

Thoughtful, witty, outspoken, Sky-TV star, Austin looks forward to being seen on television for the first time.

★ *Eye rating: Two stars*

Lavinia Bottomsup (Tory)

Fast-rising Tory high-flier, Lavinia first made her mark by introducing the bill which made seat belts compulsory on bicycles.

★ *Eye rating: Four stars*

Dennis Skinhead (Lab)

Perhaps the most popular member of the Commons for his habit of shouting obscenities at the Speaker, Skinhead was once wittily described by Julian Critchley as "not really from the top drawer".

★ *Eye rating: Three stars*

Julian Critchley (Tory)

Undoubtedly the wittiest man who ever lived, Critchley is an outspoken critic of Mrs Thatcher. He once described her as "that bossy old cow".

★ *Eye rating: Minus 10 stars*

Great Moments in Poetry

Ozythatchias

by Percy Bysshe Spartey

I met a traveller on an anti-nuclear demo,
Who told me about those two amazing piles of concrete,
That apparently exist in the desert that is Britain today.
The one is a half-finished power station,
Sizewell-B by name.
The other a half-finished tunnel under the sea near Folkstone.
They both proclaim the legend loud and clear:
"My name is Ozythatchias,
Look upon my works, ye mighty,
And vote Labour."

RADIO

BRIAN HAYES: This is LBC Crown Radio. Brian Hayes with you till twelve.

(Macho music)

HAYES: My guest this morning is Julian Clary. Julian, good morning.

CLARY *(for it is Dame Edna)*: I thank you, punters.

BRIAN HAYES: Julian, may I ask you first, where do you get your hair done? LBC first with the news, phone now to tell London your views.

CLARY: I'm Julian, and this is my friend Brian.

HAYES: Isn't that "Round the Horne"?

CLARY: It's a bit early in the morning, Brian.

HAYES *(phone rings)*: We've got Quentin from Queensway on the line. Hello Quentin.

QUENTIN: My question to Julian is, doesn't he think *Sticky Trousers*, his TV show, is a bit, well you know, smutty?

CLARY: I think you mean *Sticky Moments*, don't you?

QUENTIN: I know what I mean.

HAYES: Can we get back to your coiffure, Julian?

CLARY: I'd rather go back to my flat.

HAYES: LBC, 819-8111. We're waiting to hear from you. After the break I'll be talking to Gore Vidal, David Hockney, Francis Bacon and, of course, myself.

(Continues for hours)

POETRY CORNER

Lines on the 20th Anniversary of the *Sun* Newspaper

So. Hats off
Then.
The soaraway
Sun.

You are
Twenty.

"There's more
Fun in the
Sun."

That is
Your catchphrase.

Unfortunately,
Like everything
Else in the
Sun,

This is
Not true.

E.J. Thribb (17½-34½-17½)

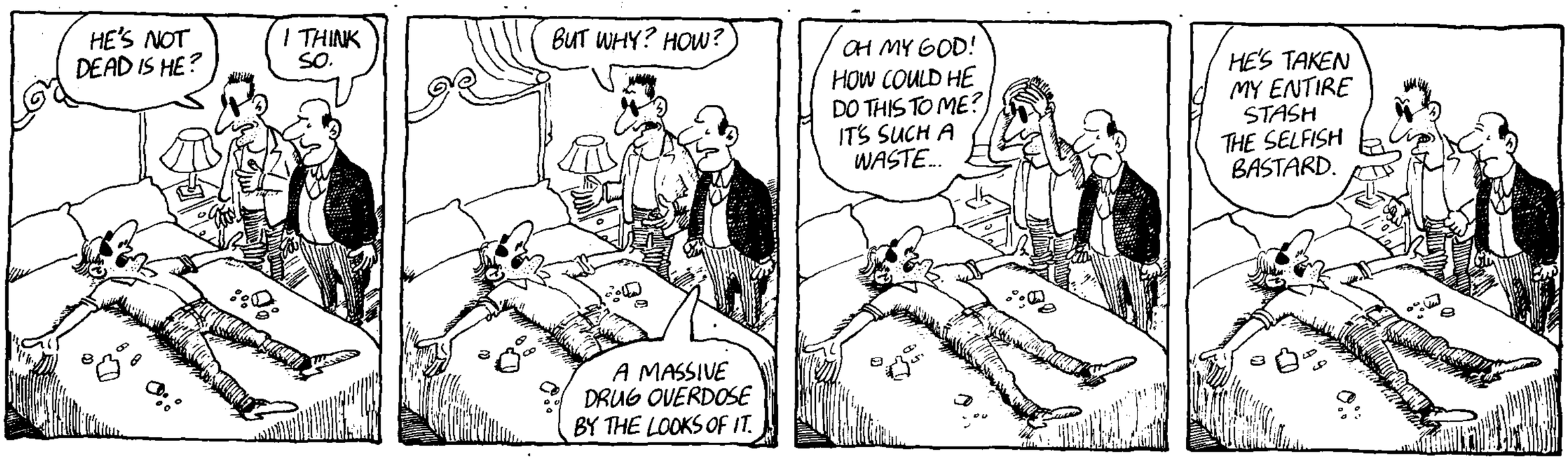
ANCHOR PLASTICS LIMITED
(WINDOW DIVISION)
STUDENTS
Required
For all general work involved with the manufacturing of uPVC windows.
£3 per week
40 hour week.
Milton Keynes Job Mart

Great Bores Of Today.

"... they're wasting millions of pounds telling us to be careful when all the facts prove that only one you know straight has actually died from AIDS ever which is staggering you remember all those ads with that girl? well she'd never get it anyway the numbers who've got the virus through normal you know sex are virtually nonexistent here I mean OK New York and Africa may be different I understand that and the exchanging needles and the haemophiliac business obviously distorts the figures but I've got this friend who works in one of the big hospitals and she reckons that the odds of someone like you or me getting it from you know ordinary intercourse are less than being run over by a number 9 bus which proves the point still you've got to be careful cos there was this bloke on the TV last night saying the estimated numbers in ten years' time could top the hundred thousand mark it's terrible could be you and me I'm going for a test on Monday..."

Celeb

LIGGER


HE'S NOT DEAD IS HE?
I THINK SO.
BUT WHY? HOW?
A MASSIVE DRUG OVERDOSE BY THE LOOKS OF IT.
OH MY GOD! HOW COULD HE DO THIS TO ME? IT'S SUCH A WASTE...
HE'S TAKEN MY ENTIRE STASH THE SELFISH BASTARD.

Daily Mail
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 24, 1984
22p

FIVE DREAM HOLIDAYS TO BE WON
SEE PAGE 39

NOW IT'S THE MAJOR MIRACLE

by Our Political Staff
BERNARD INGHAM

ONLY two weeks after assuming office John Major has become the most brilliant chancellor since Nigel Lawson.

Yesterday it became clear just what a miraculous turnaround he has achieved in Britain's economic prospects in only fourteen days.

Previously Government resources were so strained that there was no extra cash left in the kitty for

- **the health service**
- **education**
- **anything else.**

But now, thanks to the Major miracle, the Chancellor has discovered billions of pounds to spend on

- **Britain's cash starved health service**
- **Britain's teacher-starved schools**
- **everything else, where we're looking a bit dodgy in the polls.**

No wonder the Tories cheered Super Major yesterday as he unveiled his £850 billion package to put Britain back on the road to having a Tory government after the next election.

Gould slams Major's 'insult to old'

by Our Home Affairs Staff
O.A. PEE

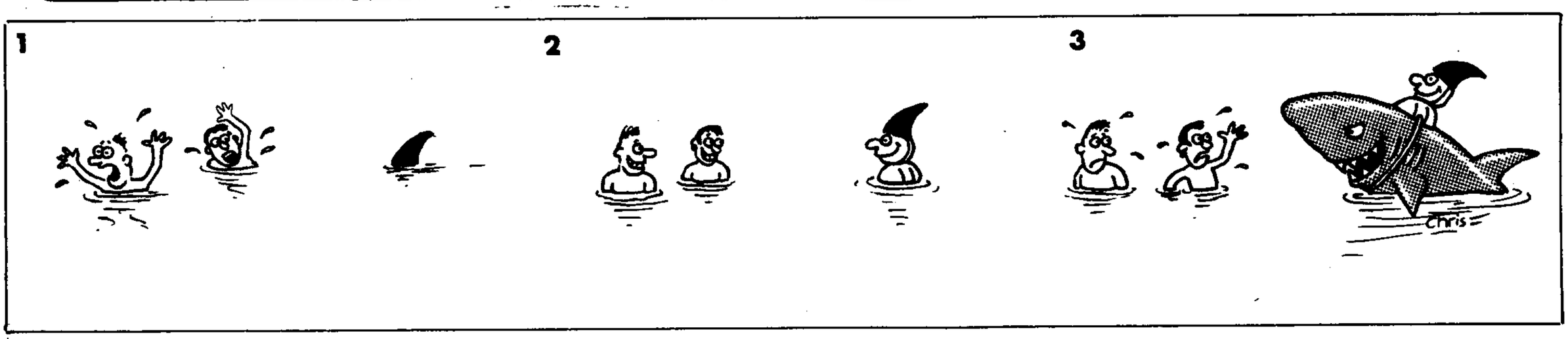
IN AN astonishing attack on John Major's proposed £2,000-a-week increase in the standard old-age pension, Mr Bryan Gould called it "pitifully inadequate, a heartless kick-in-the-teeth for Britain's senior citizens just before Christmas".

Violins played softly in the background as Mr Gould asked his audience to imagine the plight of a little grey-haired old lady, huddled alone in front of a one-bar electric fire on the 21st floor of a tower block, whilst lager-crazed rottweilers howled for her blood outside the door.

"What use to her," asked Mr Gould, "is a paltry £2,000 a week extra? It is totally unacceptable in a civilised society. We in the Labour party have said for years that more money should be made available for Britain's hard-done-by pensioners. And now this cynical Chancellor has done it. How sick can you get?"

Bryan Gould is 11.

INSIDE: Major speech sends shares plummeting p8. Why oh why didn't they get Paul Johnson to do this piece? asks A.N. Wilson p6. Unrecognisable caricature of John Major by Sprargs p2. Unfunny pompous cartoon about Berlin Wall by Gerald Scargs p3



GLENDA SLAGG

"Ich bin ein Slagg!"

SO. Charles and Di don't like their little toddlers to be seen a-piddlin' and a-widdlin' on the front of the *Sunday People*??!

Why not, for gawd's sake?!

If little Wills wants to point his namesake at the rhododendrons what could be more charming and natural for us to see?!? The royal kids are no different from ours.

Come off it, Your Toffee-Nosed Majesties! Next you'll be telling us you don't even go to the toilet!!?

HARD-BITTEN journalist as I am, I was ashamed of my profession when I opened the *Sunday People* and saw the horror pix that have shocked the nation!

How low can these so-called photographers sink?! Two innocent mites spied on by the monsters of the media a-loomin' and a-zoomin' as the kiddies answered the call of nature?!!

I hope Cap'n Bob and his prurient paparazzi are hanging their heads in shame this morning. Our hearts go out to you, Charles and Diana, in your hour of sorrow.

DAME Edna — aren'tyasickofher?!??

With her stupid glasses and her stream of smut, this overrated Aussie in drag sends me a-rushin' for the off switch?!?

"Piss off, possum", as your foulmouthed friend Sir Les would say, and get back to the Outback!?! (Geddit?!??)

FOR cryin' out loud, Maggie, what sort of country is this where our brave ambulance men are begging on the street and the sick and dying are left to get to hospital on their bikes!?!

Come on, Mrs Scrooge! Put your hand in your handbag and give these street samaritans the pittance they are asking for!

Message to readers: Toot if you support me. (Geddit?!!)

GOOD to see Edwina again?!?

Remember the egg fiasco? Well now Mrs C. is back with a vengeance to tell us all she got it wrong, or was it right?!

Who cares? Say what you like, this plucky (geddit?!)

Pamella Slagg

chicken-lover from Derby has got more get up and go to her than all the men in the Tory Party rolled into one!!?

Hats off, Mother Courage, we need you to keep things on the boil?! (Geddit?!)

SO EDWINA'S got a book out! They say it's rotten, just like the eggs (Glenda's little gag!!!)

Clear off, bossyboots, and give us all a break!!?! (Geddit?!)

HERE they are — Glenda's Berlin Wall Bangers!

HANS MODOROW — Hey there, Mr Moderate, you can bring your Hans over my defences any time?!? (Geddit?!)

EGON KRENZ — A case of Egon Face for you, ducky?!! Never mind, Auntie Glenda's always game for a bit of reunification?!? (Geddit?!)

PETER GLOVER-JAMES — Crazy name, crazy guy!? *(Who he? Ed.)*

Auf Wiedersehennnnn!!!

SCARFELAND

(The brilliant new cartoon book for Christmas)

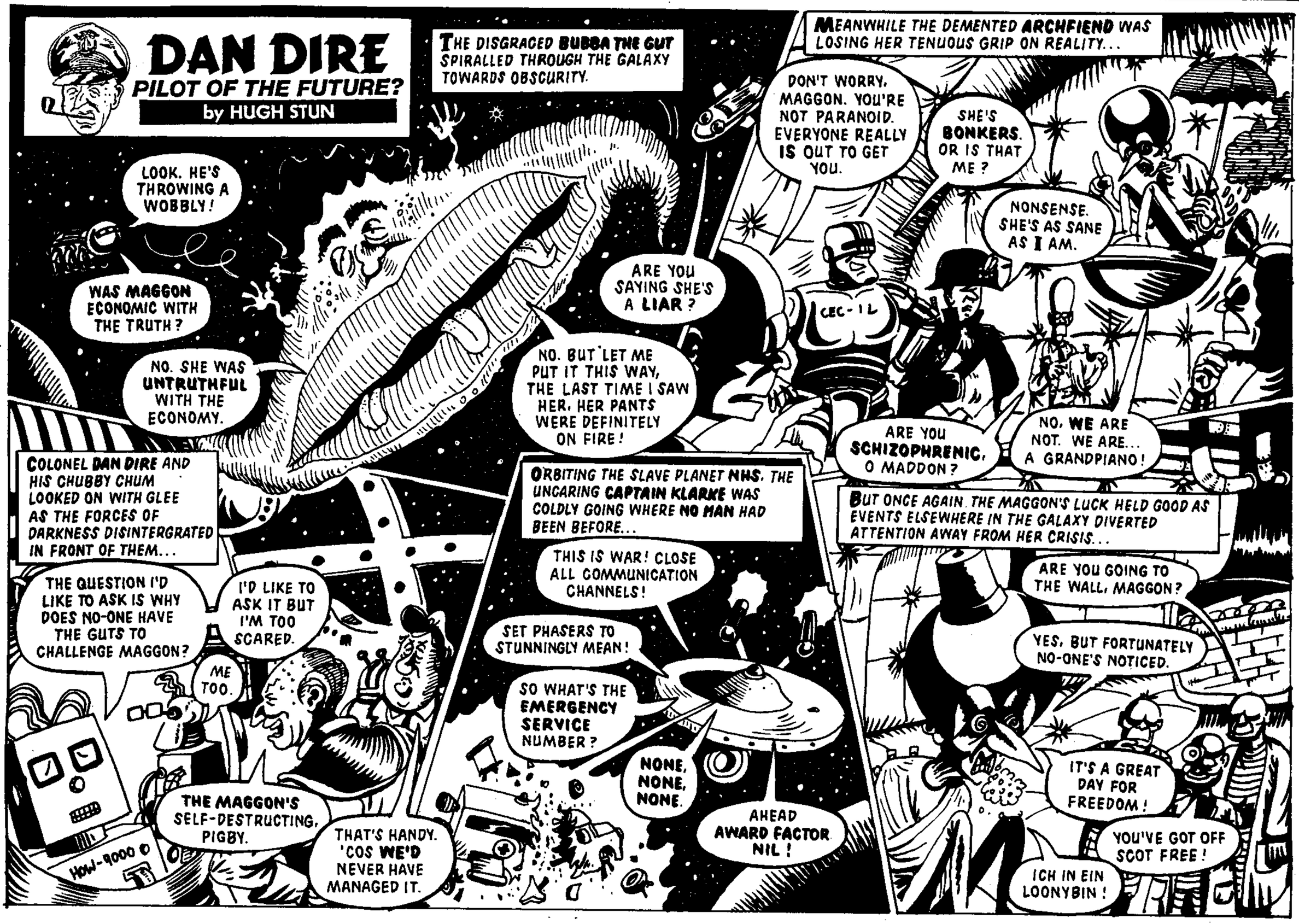
SCARFUS EGOTISTICUS USELUS

The Scarfe struts about with his consort (Janus cakus bookus) making a mess on pieces of paper and selling them at Sotheby's.

The cry of the Scarfe is "Me! Me! Me!"

He can be seen on television daily and in the Sunday Times weakly.

NEXT WEEK: Ralphus stoddicus.


DAN DIRE
PILOT OF THE FUTURE?
by HUGH STUN
THE DISGRACED BUBBA THE GUT SPIRALLED THROUGH THE GALAXY TOWARDS OBSCURITY.
LOOK. HE'S THROWING A WOBBLY!
WAS MAGGON ECONOMIC WITH THE TRUTH?
NO. SHE WAS UNTRUTHFUL WITH THE ECONOMY.
ARE YOU SAYING SHE'S A LIAR?
NO. BUT LET ME PUT IT THIS WAY, THE LAST TIME I SAW HER, HER PANTS WERE DEFINITELY ON FIRE!
MEANWHILE THE DEMENTED ARCHFIEND WAS LOSING HER TENUOUS GRIP ON REALITY...
DON'T WORRY, MAGGON. YOU'RE NOT PARANOID. EVERYONE REALLY IS OUT TO GET YOU.
SHE'S BONKERS. OR IS THAT ME?
NONSENSE. SHE'S AS SANE AS I AM.
CEC-IL
ARE YOU SCHIZOPHRENIC, O MADDON?
NO, WE ARE NOT. WE ARE... A GRANDPIANO!
COLONEL DAN DIRE AND HIS CHUBBY CHUM LOOKED ON WITH GLEE AS THE FORCES OF DARKNESS DISINTERGRATED IN FRONT OF THEM...
THE QUESTION I'D LIKE TO ASK IS WHY DOES NO-ONE HAVE THE GUTS TO CHALLENGE MAGGON?
I'D LIKE TO ASK IT BUT I'M TOO SCARED.
ME TOO.
HOW-9000
THE MAGGON'S SELF-DESTRUCTING, PIGBY.
THAT'S HANDY. 'COS WE'D NEVER HAVE MANAGED IT.
ORBITING THE SLAVE PLANET NHS, THE UNCARING CAPTAIN KLARKE WAS COLDLY GOING WHERE NO MAN HAD BEEN BEFORE...
THIS IS WAR! CLOSE ALL COMMUNICATION CHANNELS!
SET PHASERS TO STUNNINGLY MEAN!
SO WHAT'S THE EMERGENCY SERVICE NUMBER?
NONE, NONE, NONE.
AHEAD AWARD FACTOR NIL!
BUT ONCE AGAIN THE MAGGON'S LUCK HELD GOOD AS EVENTS ELSEWHERE IN THE GALAXY DIVERTED ATTENTION AWAY FROM HER CRISIS...
ARE YOU GOING TO THE WALL, MAGGON?
YES, BUT FORTUNATELY NO-ONE'S NOTICED.
IT'S A GREAT DAY FOR FREEDOM!
YOU'VE GOT OFF SCOT FREE!
ICH IN EIN LOONYBIN!

EAT UP YOUR GREENS!

The last in the current series of the hilarious ecology-conscious sitcom.

(Shot of the Green family cycling around Solihull. Silly music. Cut to Mr Green hammering nail into plank. Camera pulls back to reveal he is balanced precariously on the roof. He is attempting to put up a large windmill)

MR GREEN: Pass me those three-inch nails, Billy.

BILLY *(at bottom of ladder):* What's that, our Dad?

MR GREEN: Three-inch nails!

BILLY: What do you want three-inch snails for? We've just had breakfast. You'd better not let our Debbie hear you anyway. She's gone Vegan.

DEBBIE *(watering miniature rainforest in front garden):* Meat is Murder, our Billy.

BILLY: It is the way our Mum cooks it!

MR GREEN: Why you...!

MRS GREEN *(bringing out tray of whole earth Dandelion Coffee Drink and Animal Fat Free Chocolate-Style Digestives):* As you well know, our Billy, we've all given up flesh.

MR GREEN: I thought the excuse was that you had a headache!

MRS GREEN *(blushing):* Well, I've certainly got one now thanks to you banging away up there.

BILLY *(climbing up ladder):* I thought you said Dad had given up that sort of thing!

MRS GREEN: Billy! Come down here and wash your mouth out with some of Debbie's Whale-Friendly Eco-Soap.

DEBBIE: Oh Mum! He's already used up all my strawberry herbal toothpaste.

MRS GREEN: Good lad, Billy. That's what it's for.

DEBBIE: Not when he told my friend Sandra it was tomato purée.

MR GREEN: Tomato-puerile, more like it, if I know our Billy. Hand me that windmill blade, son, and be quick about it.

(Cut to inside kitchen. Lights are flickering. All are wrapped up in blankets staring at a kettle)

MRS GREEN: What's the time?

MR GREEN: I dunno. The clock's even slower than the kettle.

MRS GREEN: It's been five hours. How many watts did you say your wind-power would produce?

BILLY: What watts!

MR GREEN: I'll give you what watts!

DEBBIE:I dunno about watts, Mam, but I'm freezing.

BILLY: Then why don't you wrap up?

MR GREEN: It'll get better when the wind picks up. In any case, alternative energy requires certain sacrifices from the aware family.

MRS GREEN: *(bows head in prayer):* O spirit of the eternal wind that blows throughout our planet, breathe now on our Dad's home-made wind station that we might enjoy some natural whole energy...

(Suddenly a window blows open, startling them. The lights burst into life, the kettle boils, the fires heat up)

MR GREEN: It works! What did I tell you!

MRS GREEN: To be honest, our Dad, I thought you were just full of wind!

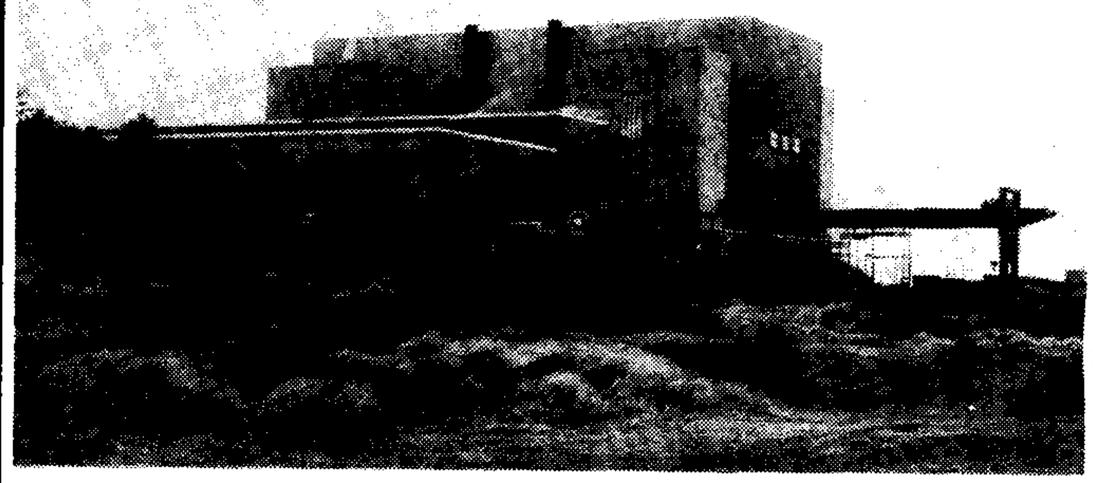
DEBBIE: Hat's off to Dad!

BILLY *(looking out of window):* You mean "Roof's off"!

(Room plunges into darkness. Cut to exterior as wind blows away windmill, chimney and roof in massive gust)

ANNOUNCER: Join the Green Family next series for more unadulterated eco-frolics, when Debbie joins the hunt saboteurs and fatally wounds Major Bloodsport with her banner.

Suffolk — 5 miles Aldeburgh, 100 miles London, M12 access



A Very Imposing Gentleman's Nuclear Power Station

with commanding views of the sea, surrounded by an estate of 2,500 acres. The property consists of a series of large buildings in a superb situation, advantageously placed for those seeking seclusion in a radioactive setting. The property includes 3 elegant cooling towers, a spacious pressurised water reactor plus toxic waste disposal facilities all recently modernised (1953) to the highest standard.

Among the many unique features of this remarkable example of 1950's industrial architecture, now offered on the market for the first time, is the fact that it is the only building in Suffolk from which one cannot see the Sizewell B Power Station.

Offers in the region of 10p to John Wakeham of

Field, Marshall and Goering

Europe's last Stalinist dictator holds firm

by Our Man in Bucharest
Al Bania

Amid the euphoria of recent days, as one Communist regime after another has crumbled, only one of the old "iron men" of Stalinism still holds his subjects in a state of terror.

From his massive, jerry-built "palace" outside Oxford, the hated dictator Robert Maxwell grimly resists the tide of change that is sweeping through the old Communist empire of Eastern Europe.

Here alone the Iron Curtain remains intact. There is no talk of freedom or reform or even the smallest concession to the workers' demands.

Maxwell

In the twilight world which has typified Maxwell's private fiefdom for decades grey, frightened apparatchiks creep along ill-lit corridors, forever looking over their shoulders and fearful of incurring the wrath of Maxwell's hated thought-police.

The one thing they fear above all is the chilling ring of the telephone in the middle of the night, and the barking voice of the "boss who never sleeps" ordering them to tell him the correct time or to come up to the private suite on the dreaded 38th floor to spoonfeed him with his beloved caviar.

Mirror on the Wall

It is hard to find anyone in the Pergamon empire who will speak to outsiders about the so-called "Fat Man of Communism", but yesterday I met one party official, Josef Haynz, who last year won the Pergamon Prize for Biography with his 800-page monument to his leader's achievements, *Maxwell, the Greatest Man Who Ever Lived—An Unofficial Biography*.

Haynz told me: "You must not believe what you are told about Comrade Bob in the capitalist media. Thanks to him we all have shoes to wear, bread to eat and enough electricity to watch television whenever he is on it.

"We do not want your western freedom here. We are happy with our life, building Socialism under the inspired leadership of Captain Bob, and we are all confident that when he is gone his democratically elected son, Bob Jr, will carry on his glorious tradition of autocracy and repression."

Stop Press

End of Berlin Wall a tragedy for Europe says Maxwell

In a statement issued last night from his Holborn Circus bunker, Comrade Maxwell called for the Berlin Wall to be rebuilt immediately.

"It is a black day," he said, "when West Germans are allowed to come into East Berlin to do their shopping, and envy the workers' paradise in which there are more than enough houses and flats for everyone, job vacancies in every factory and so many cars that people simply leave them in the streets."

THE Sun

MAILER AND FERGIE IN FOUR-LETTER WORD SHOCKER

by our New York Staff
ED COCK

GUESTS at a swanky dinner party in New York's fashionable Manhattan reeled in horror when Fergie became embroiled in a torrent of obscenities with literary giant Norman Male-Chauvinist.

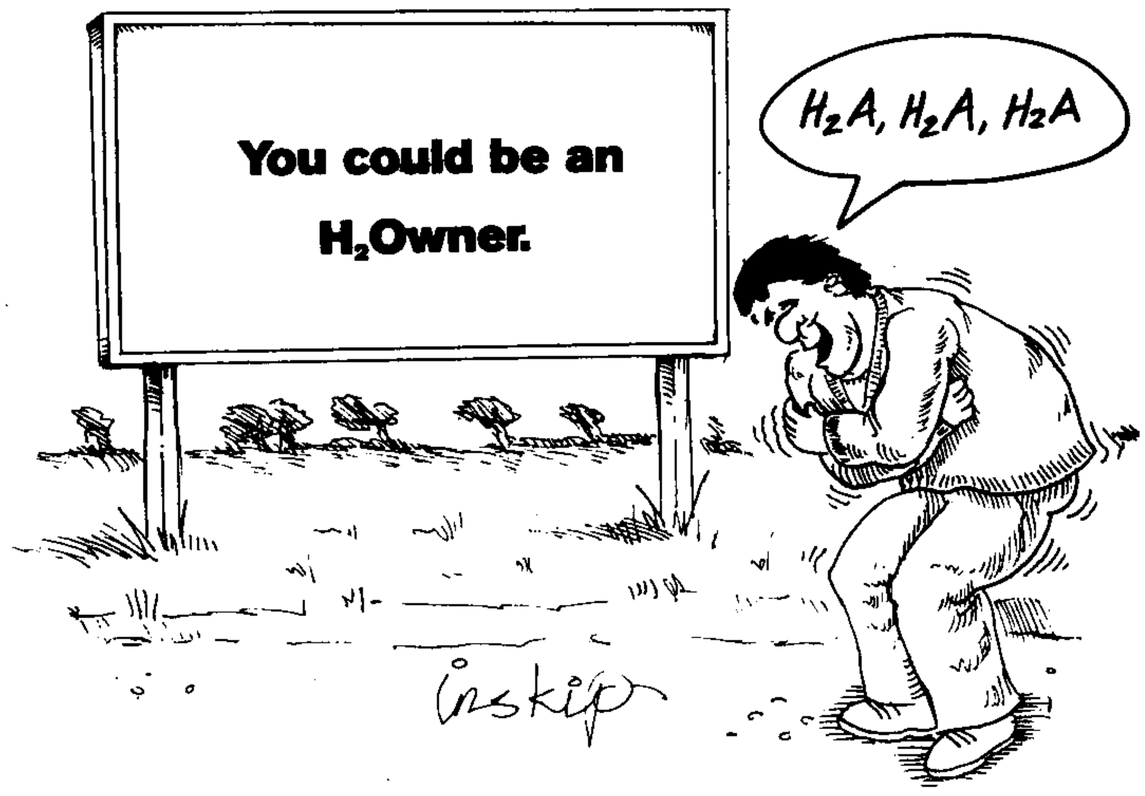
Male-Chauvinist confessed that he had not read any of author Fergie's books, and asked her "which one should be read first".

She replied that her finest work in the eyes of most critics was *Budgie Goes Off-Piste*.

When Male-Chauvinist politely asked what it was about, she clearly replied with a reference to male sexual organs – "Choppers," she said.

Fellow guests, who included British author Anthony Holden-Guest, New York socialites Pamella Trelford-Neill, Ned Twinklestein, Graydon P. Carter, Mayor Dimwit and the late Andy Warhol, were shocked and amazed to hear the Princess using such a word in front of mixed company.

Mailbox, however, rose coolly to the occasion and simply replied: "That's very wonderful, Your Royal Highness."



The Daily Telegraph

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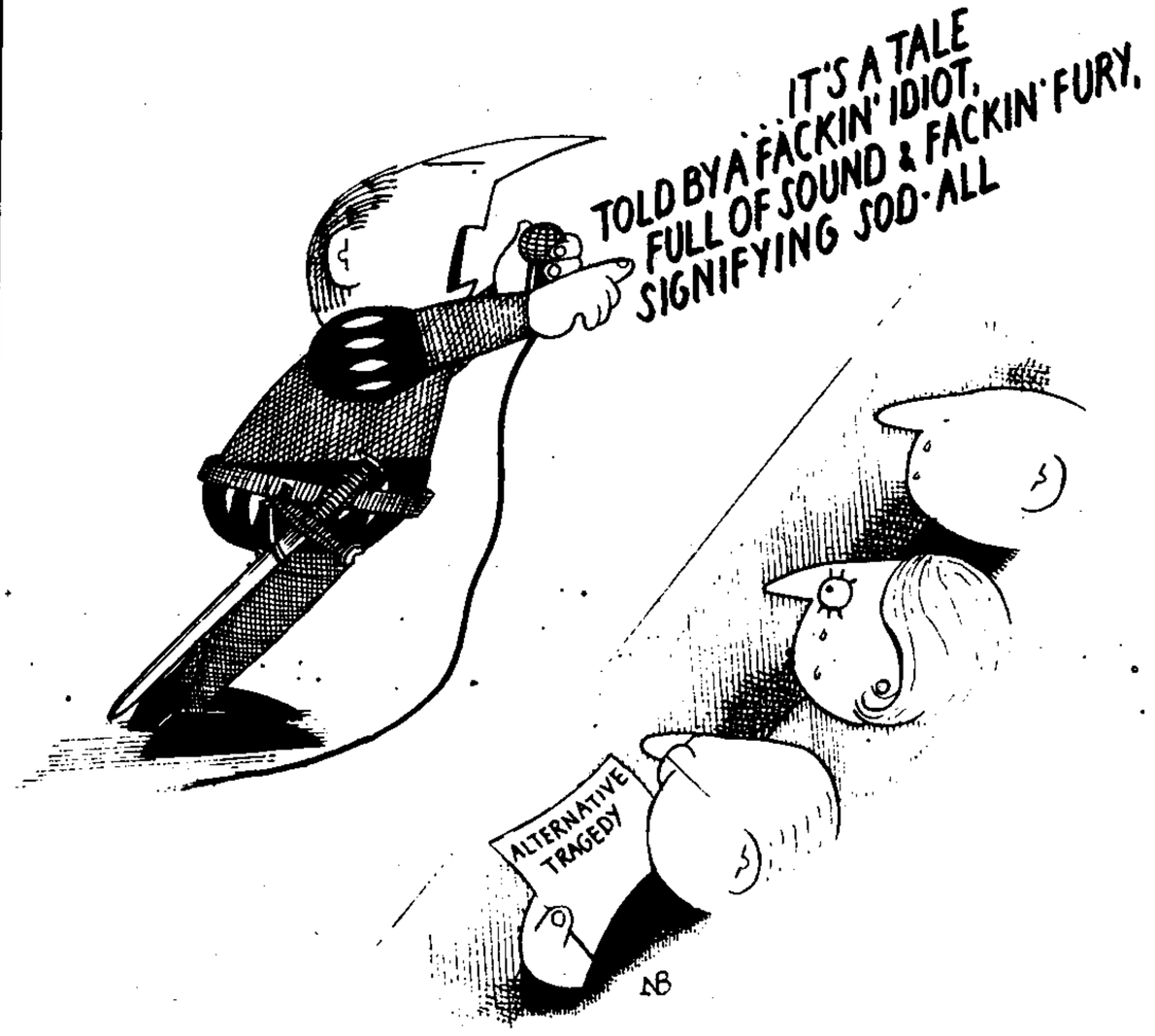
Time For Her To Go

FOR as long as most of us can remember she has presided over almost every aspect of the nation's life. Even those who had initially been sceptical about the prospect of a woman playing such a central role have long since been forced to concede that by her sheer competence, her icy self-control and her total mastery of her brief, she towered over all her contemporaries. But all of us, even her most fervent admirers, have to accept that in recent months she has become isolated and out of touch. Increasingly she comes across as bossy, imperious, even schoolmarmy. That is why we say that it is time for Sue Lawley to go.



IN THE COURTS

The case of the 600,000 Red-Bearded Cossacks (continued).

940th month.

(The longest-running libel trial in the history of the universe at last reached its long-awaited climax when the defendant Count Tallstory called as his chief witnesses the 600,000 red-bearded Cossacks, many of them deceased, whose alleged fate had allegedly given rise to the original alleged libel. The court was cleared as the gallant warriors from the Steppes filed into the witness box to be taken through their evidence by Sir Rampton Batman QC, Counsel for Count Tallstory)

SIR RAMPTON BATMAN: Will you please tell the court your full names?

FIRST COSSACK: My name is Col. Cossack Cossackovich, formerly of the First Cossack Battalion of the Imperial Cossack Guard.

SIR RAMPTON: And you are a Cossack, are you not?

MR JUSTICE COCKLECASSOCK: I hardly think he is a member of the Garrick Club, Sir Rampton.

(Barristers begin to laugh sycophantically)

COL. COSSACKOVICH: On the contrary, My Lord, I have been a member for 37 years. I was put up by my old friend, Sir Michael Havers.

SIR JUSTICE COCKERSPANIEL: But it says here you are resident in Tasmania. Isn't that rather far to come for lunch?

(More sycophantic laughter from barristers)

COL. COSSACKOVICH: It is not too far to come to point the unerring finger of justice at the guilty man whose name lives in infamy in Cossack annals.

(Points finger at the plaintiff, Lord Allalongtimeago)

SIR HARTLEY REDFACE QC (*for Lord Allalongtimeago*): I must object, My Lord. This evidence is clearly prejudicial to my client, it is not covered by the pleadings, it is hearsay and it sounds rather good for the other side. I must therefore ask that this witness be taken at once on a train to Yugoslavia in accordance with the order given on 21st April 1945 which you will find in Case bundle Q, at the divider, under section-heading VIIIB, The Return of the Slovene Home-Guard.

MR JUSTICE COCKATRICE: It seems to me, Sir Hartley, that I haven't made a joke for some time now, and therefore I think we should adjourn for five minutes while I think one up.

(Earlier, the Court had heard the evidence of Capt. Nigel Tweed of Kent, who had formerly been AC/DC to the 13th Welsh Dragoons stationed in Ruthenia in the summer of 1945)

TWEED: It really was appalling. There were all these Cossacks. I was ordered to go down to the station to wave them off, and wish them a pleasant holiday at the Venice Butlins. I found the whole business dreadfully upsetting.

MR JUSTICE COQAUVIN: But you still carried out your orders, didn't you? Doesn't that make you a war criminal, Capt. Tweed? I am sure the jury may come to that conclusion, however unjustly, even if I ask them to strike it from their minds, which I shall now do. Members of the jury, I must ask you to forget entirely any impression you have formed that Capt. Twit is an undoubted war criminal, which he is.

JURY: Z-z-z-z.

SIR HARTLEY REDFACE: If I may continue, My Lord, I would ask the court now to turn its attention once again to the important question of the weather at Klagerlout airfield on the afternoon of 26th April 1945. By agreement between the parties, My Lord, I am asking leave to introduce an astonishing new document which may prove beyond doubt that Lord Allalongtimeago could not have flown back to England any later than 2.30pm on the previous day, 27th April, thus giving him a complete alibi for all war crimes committed in his name.

MR JUSTICE COCKUPTHEBUMCASE: This really is most irregular, Sir Hartley. I hope this document does indeed turn out to pass the Marshall-Ward test for late pleadings, as set down in the case of General Spiderman v. Pluto the Wonderdog, 1934.

SIR HARTLEY REDFACE: Indeed, My Lord, it does. It is a copy of the *Daily Telegraph* weather forecast dated 21st April 1945.

(Intake of breath from Jury)

MR JUSTICE CENTIGRADE: A sunny day in Bognor, I see. How does that help you Sir Hartley — unless you intend to call Mr Ian McCaskill as your next witness?

(Barristers laugh so much that they have to fan each other with huge wads of notes)

SIR HARTLEY: That is precisely what I intend to do, My Lord.

(Enter small gesticulating Scotsperson)

McCASKILL (*for it is he*): Well, it was another lovely day in Southern Austria, just the sort of afternoon to fly off back to Blighty in a light aeroplane. But it's a bad day for any Cossacks, with this nasty little Low coming up behind them...

MR JUSTICE COCKLESPARROW: I hope that is not a reference to the plaintiff, Mr McCaskill — if so it would clearly be defamatory, were it not uttered in a Court of Law, which of course it is.

(Muted laughter from disappointed solicitors deprived of further fees in the case of Low v. McCaskill. The court then heard the evidence of a number of British officers who were unable to give evidence in person owing to the fact that they had died 20 years ago. They included Gen. Sir Horatio Massingberd-Gusset, former commanding officer of the 14th Dorsets, Col. Oddly-Familiar of the 23rd Kensington and Chelsea Fusiliers and Col. "Chalky" Chalkington of the 29th/31st Bangladeshi Scouts. The case continues until Christmas)

"Actually, I get more respect now than I did in teaching"

HEIR OF SORROWS

BY

SYLVIE KRIN

THE STORY SO FAR: Following his hectic tour of Hong Kong, Charles now seeks solitude in an ancient Buddhist shrine.

Now read on...

CHARLES sat cross-legged in the bow of the Ying Tong junk while the passive figures of the saffron-robed monks of the Temple of the Golden Gerbil paddled in silent rhythm. Beneath the buffalo hide and bamboo construction of the ancient craft, the placid waters of the River Diddlei Po flowed by and there, in the late afternoon sunset, the majestic outline of the Pagoda of See Goon appeared, just as Sir Laurens had described in his book *A Journey Out of Time*.

Charles could remember the passage almost word for word, as the ancient sage relived his first impressions of the temple:

"Everywhere there are giant sequoia trees, filled with chattering bats and above them towers the temple like a great golden horseshoe."

How true that was. Except that there was no sign of the trees. Or the bats. Or the horseshoe for that matter.

An old monk turned to face Charles and smiled through his wispy beard and yellowing teeth.

"Temple soon come. Tai Pan no worry." Charles nodded. After the hustle and bustle of the ghastly metropolis of Hong Kong he was looking forward to the hours of silent meditation at the feet of the holy abbot, the Dalai Lev Vin.

The waterlilies drifted by as the boat glided onwards like a slender fish and Charles mused on his life. For a moment his reverie was tinged with a sort of sadness thingie, as he remembered his parting with Diana, who had left him that morning at Ko Kain Airport.

"I realise you must go to this Cenotaph affair," he had said.

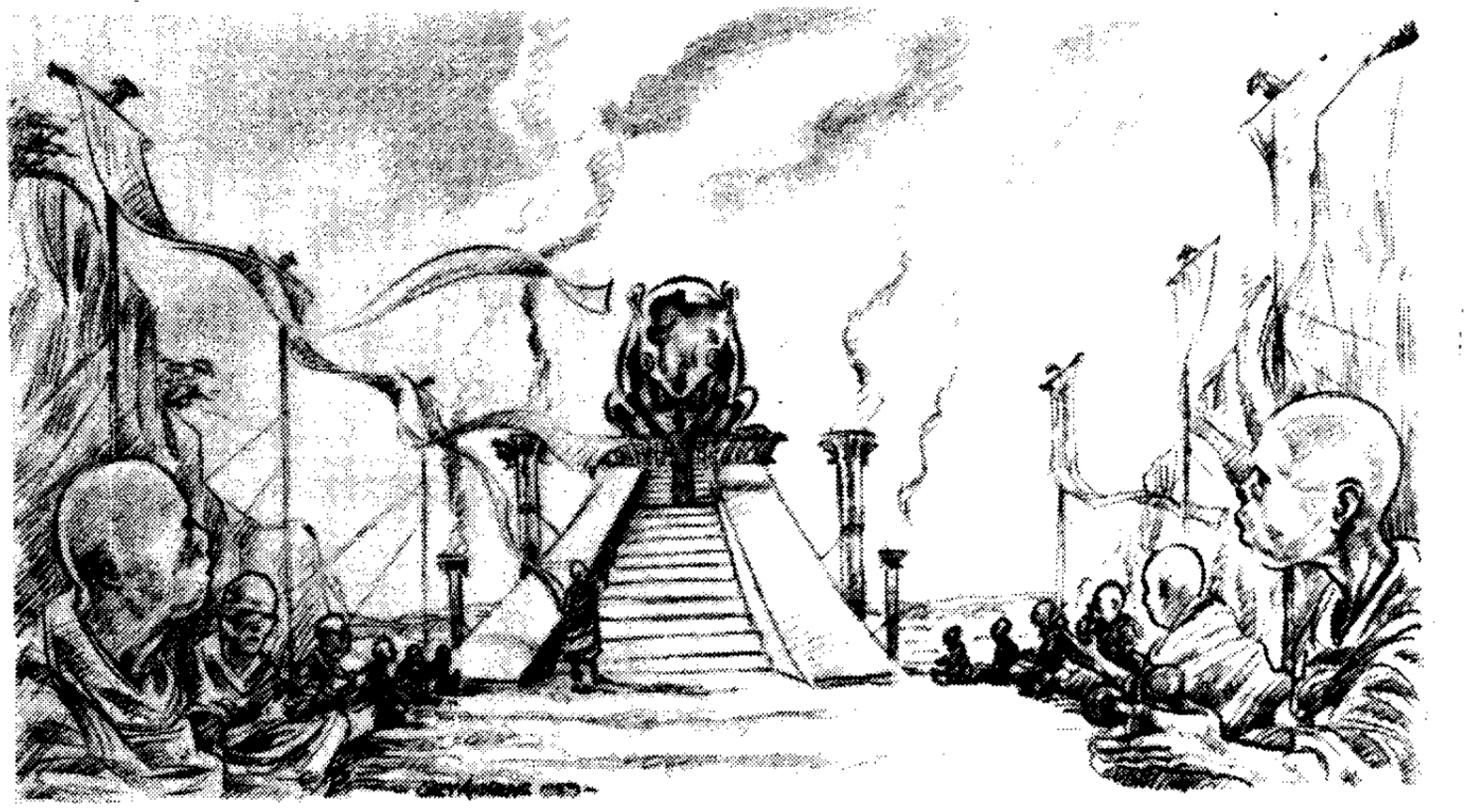
"Yah. It's my duty. It's what your father's always banging on about."

They had put a brave face on it but he knew, as Sir Laurens put it, "parting is such sweet sorrow". It was true. Parting was... appalling.

From the approaching temple came the sound of the Great Gong of Lank, summoning the monks to their evening office. The boat drew in to the little jetty and moored. Charles disembarked gingerly and, carrying his sketchpad and watercolours set (a present from Sir Hugh Casson), he began the long climb up the legendary Path of a Thousand Rose Petals.

"NOW IS time." Dalai Lev Vin drew Charles to the mouth of the Giant Golden Gerbil. It really was terrifically impressive in its way, this huge creature with ruby eyes and jade teeth. He had learned the legend of the Gerbil earlier that day from the lips of one of the old monks who had delivered his early morning cup of lentil tea.

"If Prince from far land can put head in mouth of Gerbil, he go home King."



Charles could hardly contain his excitement. And now he was about to put the ancient prophecy to the test. The monks, kneeling in a semi-circle, began to chant and clash finger-cymbals in a hypnotic rhythm. Charles moved unsteadily to the gaping maw of the giant rodent. His heart beat faster and faster as the voices of the monks swelled to a climax.

Charles plunged his head downwards and banged his forehead on the sharp jade teeth of the great idol. For a moment he thought he had failed the test. But then, suddenly, incredibly, almost miraculously, the jaws opened and his head entered the cavernous hollow.

The monks rose to their feet, cheering, shouting and lighting firecrackers in a sort of general hysteria.

Charles withdrew triumphantly, and beamed at the frenzied crowd. In his excitement he failed to see the tiny figure of a novice pressing a red button marked OPEN at the rear of the most famed mystic icon of the Orient.

"Your Majesty... Your Majesty!" The Dalai embraced Charles warmly. "You are the King. The chosen one. The Gerbil has spaken thus."

ON THE flight back, Charles seemed to exist in a daze. The magnitude of the event was too great to take in. King at last. His head on the coin. So many things to think about.

The sound of the Gong reverberated in his mind blotting out the "non-stop Kylie" channel on the stereo. The voice of the Abbot prophesying his destiny overrode the wisecracks of Dudley Moore in the hilarious *Arthur 7* playing on the screen.

And when the door of the aeroplane swung open and he emerged onto the landing steps in the chill November evening, his mind was still filled with but one thought: "Arise, Great King. You are ruler of all you survey."

Charles clutched his portfolio, filled with sketches of the Temple by moonlight, which he thought, incidentally, were really quite good given the sudden change of events, and surveyed his realm.

"Charles. Do hurry up. You look as though you've been sleepwalking."

The imperious tones of his mother assaulted him like a bucket of cold water in the face.

"I... er... er... sort of... I..."

There was no doubt it was the Queen, in all her regal majesty. There could be no mistake that it was she, alive and scolding.

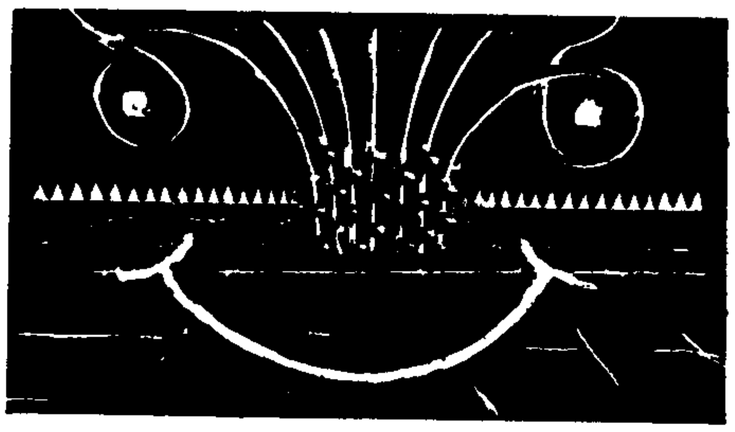
"We're due at Clarence House at 6.30 and then we're meeting the Ambassador at 8.00. I'll tell you one thing. You've got a lot to learn, if you're ever going to be King."

The roar of Concorde taking off overhead drowned for ever the remnants of his dream and the promise of the Gong...

(To be continued)

The new Heir of Sorrows book — THE PEOPLE'S PRINCE — is now on sale at £2.50

DIARY



ANTONIA FRASER

Napkins, or serviettes, continue to be a problem. One was always brought up to believe that they were indispensable at all times, and one's father would invariably use one while masticating. Harold prefers to employ the back of his hand, so that at the close of one of our important socialist discussion groups — of which more later — he has numerous gobbets of smoked salmon sandwich embedded between the masculine hairs that sprout so luxuriantly from his wrist. Of course, the servants, absolute dears, are immensely grateful for these gobbets — needless to say they simply *adore* smoked salmon! — but I still maintain that the use of a sturdy napkin, or serviette, would ensure that these little treats could be popped into the servants' mouths free from excess hair. I would be interested to know what readers think.

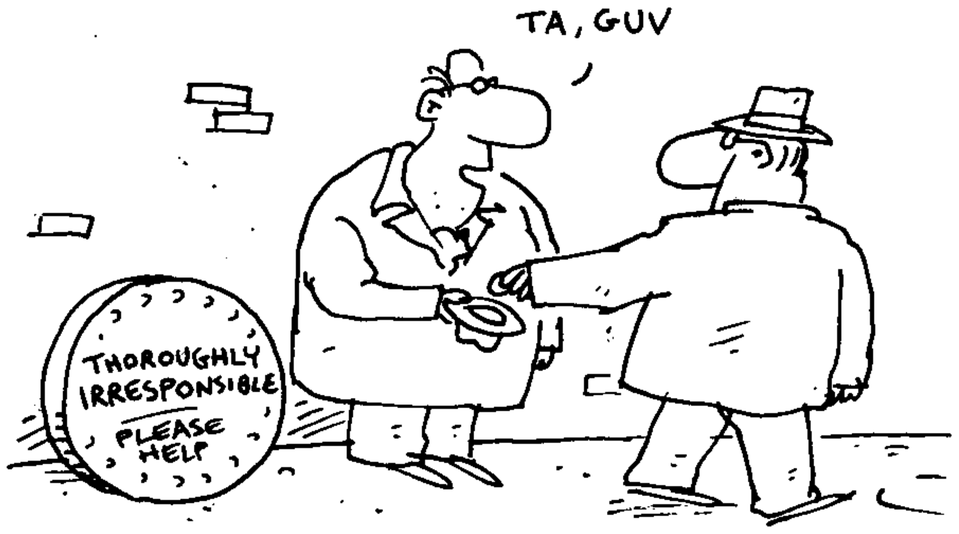
Still on the napkin, or serviette, problem: should one place them any-old-how beside each setting at a dinner party, or should one attempt to construct something a little more artistic? A month or so ago, we enjoyed the company of President Daniel Ortega as a house-guest, and I insisted before his arrival that we should turn our napkins, or serviettes, into marvellous "fighting fists", to show our solidarity with his delicious struggle in Barbados. Daniel, who, contrary to what one hears in the right-wing press, is an absolute poppet, was tremendously touched. In Barbados, he told us, the freedom fighters must do without napkins, or serviettes, so they would be especially touched by my small (and to my mind hopelessly inadequate) gesture. The very next day, I nipped out to Peter Jones and ordered 300,000 paper napkins, or serviettes — one for each of his marvellous Sindinastis, and I have made it quite clear that they mustn't all waste their precious time writing thank-you letters. We must each of us do what we can to help the cause, Harold says.

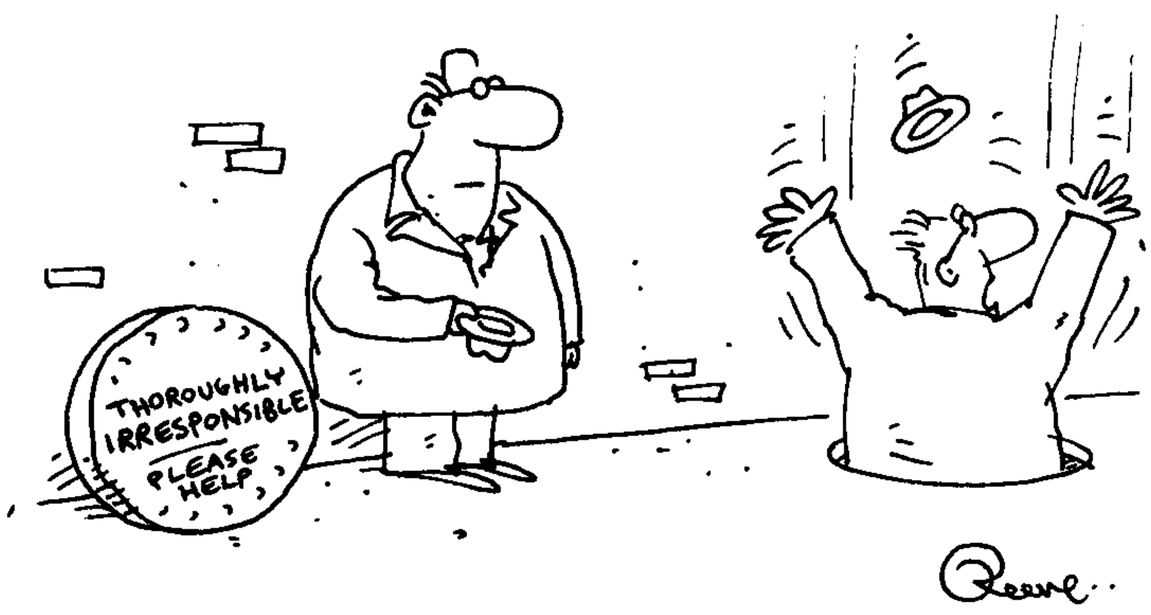
With all due respect to politics, one must never neglect one's literature, like it or not. I am at present engaged in writing a super biography of someone from the olden days, and I am also busy compiling an anthology called *Ordinary Blokes with Hearts of Gold: The Working Classes in Literature*, which is the wonderful idea of my great friend George Weidenfeld. George it was who steered me through my other best-selling anthologies, *Of Posies and Petticoats: Nice Things from Books* and *Second Helpings: Lady Antonia Fraser selects her Favourite Meals from Great Literature*. George thinks that it would be an excellent idea to get a real member of the working-class to write an introduction, so I have been racking my brains. At the moment, we've only been able to come up with Arthur Mullard or Major "Ron" Ferguson, but any other suggestions would be more than welcome.

When a small but exclusive group of distinguished people agreed to hold informal socialist discussion groups, we little expected the torrent of abuse and sheer bad manners that would rain down upon us. Our inaugural dinner took place at a marvellous little restaurant, The River Cafe in darkest Hammersmith. A stimulating evening indeed. Jonathan (Raban) kicked off the discussion by pointing out that his Ramekin of Escalopes of Duck Foie Gras in a Muscat Sauce had cost almost as much as the weekly Child Benefit awarded to an unmarried mother with two kiddies, "and I still haven't had my main course". David (Hare) was equally gloomy about the state of Thatcher's Britain. "It makes me sick to think that this Mille-Feuille of Baby Lobster served in a Light Mangetout Sauce with an accompanying salad of Roquefort, Avocado and Croutons on a Bed of Black Walnuts represents a day and a half's pay to a Grade Two Ambulance Driver. What the hell can we do about it, that's what I'd like to know?" By this time, tears were streaming down his cheeks. "Perhaps if we had a little word with the Manager," suggested John (Mortimer), "he could wangle us a bit of a discount for our next group booking."

The June 20th Group has since disbanded, for we have achieved most of our aims. When the rest of the country realised that figures of the calibre of John (Mortimer) and Melvyn (Bragg) were thinking Left-wing thoughts, they all wanted to follow suit, and now, thanks in no small part to us, Mrs Thatcher is well down in the polls. But we still make the effort to give over the odd evening to entertaining Neil and Glenys. To set them at their ease, I tend to eschew my normal silks for more down-to-earth "overalls", and we serve what I believe are known as "chip butties" with lashings of "custard", though it suits me to eat something else later. What a sweet couple they are! After they have finished the washing-up, I always insist on pressing some small change into their hands, but they won't hear of it. Harold and I simply can't wait for them to be the next little people in Number Ten!

Of course, Harold was himself born slightly "working class" (incidentally, what a beastly term that is!), but you wouldn't guess it now. Occasionally, one of his "little ways" comes back — at dinner the other night at Clarence House he flew into one of his "rages" about I-don't-know-what and challenged the Queen Mother to an arm-wrestling context — but otherwise you couldn't tell. And I'm delighted to say that, come January 1st, he has promised to employ a napkin, or serviette, and to refrain from terming it a "snotrag". Happy New Year!





Literary Review

Separating the wheat from the naff

Absent Friends
Geoffrey Wheatcroft
Hamish Hamilton, £15.95

IT IS EARLY days yet — the man is barely 44 — but already there seems every sign that Geoffrey Wheatcroft is shaping up to become one of the great English comic characters, a sort of Cyril Connolly *de nos jours*. The blurb of his new book, a collection of reminiscences of various dead acquaintances, gives only a hazy idea of his accomplishments and capacities — the profound *Spectator* leaders, the fearless columns in the *Sunday Telegraph* — but it encapsulates, in one striking phrase, the impetus behind the grand trajectory of the Wheatcroft career.

"He migrated to journalism," somebody has written here, "as the only trade compatible with his aptitudes and habits of life." What can this mean? Is it a polite way of advancing the scurrilous claim that Mr Wheatcroft liked a drop and was more or less unemployable? One trusts not. One trusts, rather, that the phrase is a simple confirmation of the fact that, despite his perhaps embarrassing social behaviour and his propensity to have to leave jobs to which he was appointed, the young Wheatcroft possessed one singular gift.

How he came by this ability to insinuate himself into the company of so many elderly, famous men, we shall never know. But what else could explain the presence on this list of absentees of names as sonorous as Larkin, Goronwy Rees and Sir Hugh Fraser? What else could have caused so many of the eminent to befriend one who was at this time — we must, alas, be blunt — an obscure and indifferently regarded hack? Plainly, the young Wheatcroft had some rare and ineluctable talent to which the great happily condescended.

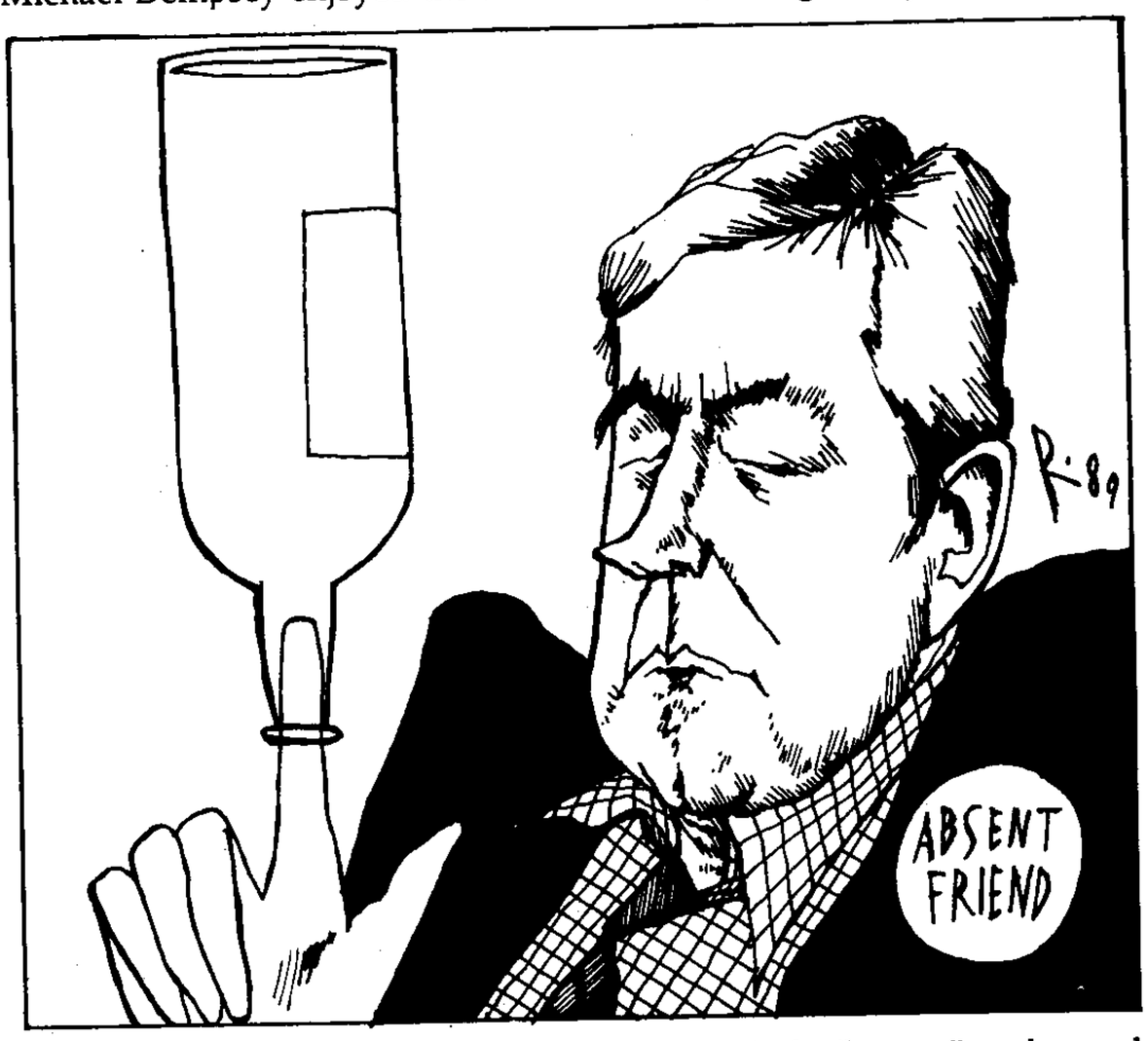
As a result the relationships described here are full of homely comfort. It is good to know — a gloss on the declining years of a great poet — that Wheatcroft, on his introduction to Philip Larkin, "felt (presumptuously and protectively, perhaps) that I understood him"; cheering to discover that Wheatcroft, by his own admission "low-spirited and highly strung", found that Sir Hugh Fraser's "quietly dashing charm cheered me up".

We can be thankful too that Mr Wheatcroft, eschewing the cloak of anonymity in which so many memorialists see fit to drape themselves, does not scruple to tell us about himself. It is fascinating to learn, for instance, that the publisher Michael Dempsey enjoyed the sexual facilities (little boys) afforded by Marrakesh, but that it was "a place I hated when I first went there more than ten years later". In such juxtapositions the interplay of the biographer/subject relationship stands revealed.

A lesser writer might have felt that his own opinions were of negligible account in such a recitation of other people's lustre and *eclat*. Thankfully Mr Wheatcroft, mindful of the eager public for whom the expression of his views in the *Sunday Telegraph* and elsewhere is such an instructive delight, remains, even in these reminiscences, animated by the crusading zeal for which he is rightly renowned. When he apologises for a youthful predisposition towards the jazz trumpet, we can nod our heads soberly over the rectification of his early folly. Elsewhere, he tells us of the "charlatanry" of the Cambridge English school, that the quality of Members of Parliament has steadily declined and that the Labour Party is composed of "would-be commissars and Gentlemen in Whitehall who really do know best". These are original views, boldly expressed.

Throughout *Absent Friends* Mr Wheatcroft laments various "English vices", such as hypocrisy and snobbishness. He might have added modesty to the list. So many accounts of the writing life are disfigured by the author's inability to give a just account of his achievements. Mr Wheatcroft's continual expressions of frank honesty over his performances — "as I was to write in an obituary for *The Times* in what seemed the right style... I had written, though I say it, an admirably ironical tribute..." — do much to redress this imbalance.

The result is a masterpiece of comic writing, in which the author's cultivation of himself as a wholly preposterous figure, a more wanton version of Mr Pooter, is a joy to read. The book should perhaps have been retitled *The Diary Of A Somebody's Friend* or even *Portrait Of The Artist As A Coat-Tail Chaser*. At any rate, Mr Wheatcroft's position as one of our great humorous figures is now secure.



Books & Bookmen

BEFORE this year's hooha over the Whitbread prize, Sam Whitbread, chairman of the brewers, had been asking why his award never received the same publicity as the Booker frequently does, even though the Whitbread prize tends to go to more invigorating and original titles.

The solution? Follow the example of Booker's administrator, Martyn "Almighty" Goff, and be mischievous in your choice of judges so they'll be unlikely to agree on the best book and there will be a public cat fight.

Thus it came to pass.

"Almighty" however had the nerve to write an *Independent* article opining that this year's Whitbread and the judges' leaks brought all book awards, naturally including the Booker, into disrepute.

As it happens, booksellers regard this year's Booker as little short of a disaster. The winner, Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day*, was selling well before it won the prize. For the first time in years none of the other five shortlisted titles even creeps on to the bottom of the bestseller list whereas *London Fields* rides triumphant at number eight.

A NOXIOUS atmosphere has descended upon Michelin House where Piers Russell-Cobb, Heinemann's jovial and resourceful publicity director, has been sacked recently by edict of extra ordinary accountant Ian Irvine, chief executive of the Octopus group.

Irvine was at the Frankfurt Book Fair when he read an interview Russell-Cobb had given to the Daily Torygraph on the state of British publishing. Among his innocuous observations, Russell-Cobb made the controversial claim that the best thing about his job was the books and the authors; the worst thing was the bureaucracy.

It will be recalled that it was Irvine, when appointed by Paul Hamlyn, who ordered that busy executives mustn't consort during office hours with authors, who mustn't be admitted to the building, and that there shouldn't be any books around for people to nick.

When Irvine read Russell-Cobb's remarks, he demanded his head on a platter. Helen Fraser, publisher of Heinemann, was not consulted for the simple reason that she considers Russell-Cobb to be one of the best publicists in the business. Instead, the saturnine Richard Charkin, Irvine's sidekick, rang Russell-Cobb's secretary from Frankfurt to fix an appointment for first thing on Monday morning. At this meeting Charkin did his master's bidding and advised Russell-Cobb to find another job by Christmas.

"Does it interest you to know," asked Russell-Cobb, "that my wife has just given birth to a premature baby?" Charkin betrayed not a flicker of emotion at this (he already knew) and barely suppressed his glee when Russell-Cobb decided to leave forthwith.

One task as publicity director was to organise a staff outing to a Michael Jackson concert at Wembley (Jackson's Moonwalker was a bestseller for Heinemann). When Irvine asked for the front-row seats, Russell-Cobb assumed he meant at the special CBS enclosure in the stadium. He was mildly amused to discover Irvine had meant the front seats on the coach to Wembley. "There's got to be some advantage to being chief executive," Irvine pathetically explained.

'Bookworm'

Nuclear power

One in the Eye...

ON WHAT should have been the last full day of the last public inquiry ever into nuclear power, Hinkley Point witnessed A Disturbance. Lord Silsoe, the CEGB's distinguished QC, pushed his chair to one side. Raindrops were falling on his head because the ceiling of the elegant college hall at Cannington, Somerset, was leaking. "Just like his nuclear power stations," said someone. "Or the Department of Energy," quipped someone else.

Others were studying advertisements in that day's newspapers. "We are looking for a Senior Accountant in the Nuclear Accounting Group, the centre of expertise. The Senior Accountant will develop accounting techniques for handling long-term liabilities and cost forecasts." It came from National Power, successor to the CEGB, which certainly needed someone to dream up more convincing statistics. Except that it was, at that very time, being relieved of its nuclear liabilities.

By now the government climbdown was complete and its sell-off programme a shambles. Finally it was admitting what it had been told repeatedly: it could not sell nuclear power because the City would not buy it.

We said so in the *Eye* on 4 August, just after John Wakeham was appointed energy secretary with the brief to keep nuclear power in the privatisation package. He had been forced to admit that he could not privatise the old Magnox stations. We said: "The same will apply to the AGRs."

We repeated it on 15 September: "Experts close to the CEGB's top management now say privately that the Government is blundering in trying to leave any part of nuclear power in the package." And on 13 October: "There is a widespread suspicion that, once the Tories have held their conference, the whole nuclear sector will be pulled back from the privatisation offer."

Wakeham, meanwhile, was saying again and again that nuclear power *would* be put up for sale.

He said it soon after being appointed, when it was charitably assumed he did not know what he was talking about; he repeated it in September to the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna; he said it again on *The World at One*; he said it at a conference organised by the CBI and, most significantly of all, he said it at the Tory Party conference.

In his statement to Parliament saying the opposite, Mr Wakeham claimed: "It was in fact only on 11 October that I finally managed to get the figures I needed to make this decision." MPs did not see the significance of the date. It was just one day before, on 10 October, that Mr Wakeham addressed the Tory conference and gave his pledge that nuclear power would be privatised. Now, he would have us believe, by a remarkably convenient coincidence, the very next day he learned from his civil servants that he had got it all completely wrong.

By another, equally odd coincidence, the Hinkley Point inquiry was adjourned at the end of September for six weeks after the CEGB had admitted that the planned power station would cost 3 per cent more than the original estimate. The length of the adjournment seemed excessive — and the date of the resumption happened to be 7 November, just when it was learned that Mr Wakeham was to pull back the nuclear plants.

Another remarkable coincidence? Yes, said Wakeham when he was challenged at his press conference that day. It was certainly *not* a device to enable him to put on a brave face at the Tory party conference. Perish the thought.

Government watchers will note that first it was Peter Walker, then Cecil Parkinson who told the prime minister that it was impossible to get the City to buy nuclear power. She brushed the thought aside and them with it — Walker to Wales, Parkinson down to Transport.

Loyal Wakeham was then appointed to sort out the mess. Thatcher had decided, as long ago as 1979, that there would be ten pressurised water reactors built, one a year for 10 years, and that was that. But then even Wakeham found it was not on and he was lucky: the PM was in too weak a position to do anything but accept.

Wakeham, blessed with the face of a simple, honest man, perhaps felt it was best to tell the nation a stream of lies until the moment was judged right to admit he had been wrong all the time.

The end of the Hinkley inquiry was also treated to a demonstration of the Government's farcical obsession with secrecy, particularly where nuclear power is concerned.

The inspector, Mr Michael Barnes QC, interrupted proceedings to make way for a fellow lawyer, a Mr Steel, who had been sitting quietly all day waiting for someone to try to introduce secret Cabinet documents. He was then to rush forward saying they should not be admitted into the public domain.

Unfortunately the documents, most of which had already been leaked, had been sent through the post and did not arrive on time. So that Mr Steel's journey was not wasted, he was invited to issue his warning anyway. He had to do it without saying whether or not the extracts already published, and any documents which might yet appear, were or were not genuine. This made it impossible to cite the new secrets legislation.

He said "purported extracts" had been published and that the National Union of Mineworkers had extracts, "if they be extracts which again, Sir, I am neither confirming or (sic) denying." If the whole document were to be admitted to the inquiry, "that could lead to compounding the mystery which has already occurred, if it has occurred." Having thus censored a document, if it be a document, which nobody at the inquiry could introduce, because nobody had a copy, if it be a copy, he then vanished like a puff of smoke.

He was talking about two newsletters published by the *Financial Times* — Power in Europe (£470 a year) edited by Andrew Holmes, and International Coal Report (£452 a year) edited by Gerard McCloskey. The documents turned up next day and their main revelation was that 30,000 coal miners would be made redundant when the electricity industry was privatised because the new owners would buy cheap foreign coal.

So how did the whole nuclear fiasco come about? Largely because those at the top of the energy establishment persuaded themselves nuclear power was best and they never found the courage to admit they were wrong.

Even now the Labour leadership can't make up its mind whether or not, in power, it would complete the building of Sizewell B. The Sizewell inquiry, which took two-and-a-quarter years, resulted in an eight-volume report by Sir Frank Layfield, a pillar of the bar, saying that we must have nuclear power because it was cheap.

At the next inquiry, into Hinkley Point C, Mr Barnes, to his credit, insisted the CEGB provide costings comparing nuclear power and coal power. Coal was by now undeniably cheaper, so the Government and the CEGB invented a new reason: they needed nuclear because it was different from coal and we must have diversity, even if it cost more. But not even that excuse can be sustained when the City and the Treasury say no.

The winners are the objectors who, by making the Sizewell inquiry last for 2¼ years, and the Hinkley inquiry for 1½, delayed the nuclear programme long enough to make the Government think again.

Now all that is needed is an energy policy and a way of keeping the lights burning as our power stations expire.

Pollution

Fume what a scorcher!

AFTER carefully considering more than 750 entries, *Management Today* magazine has just announced the five winners of its "Britain's Best Factories" award for 1989. One of the lucky five is Oxford Automotive Components — a factory in north Oxford whose pollution record is so bad that it is currently being threatened with prosecution.

The factory, which makes petrol tanks, exhausts and suchlike, is sited in the middle of a donnish residential area off Woodstock Road. Local inhabitants have been complaining for more than 10 years about the noxious stench and the interminable noises (constant metal-banging, forklift trucks coming and going all night, etc). But things became much worse earlier this year when OAC won a big contract from Honda and installed new automatic paint-coating equipment, which has been belching out toxic fumes into the atmosphere.

Hundreds of people living nearby now have to keep all their windows shut 24 hours a day, and are unable to venture outdoors without being almost suffocated. The smell is described as "nauseating"; headaches have proliferated. More alarmingly, the fumes include Xylene, which is known to be carcinogenic.

When the new machine was installed, officers from the local council's environmental health department were told by the factory that it would be using only water-based paint — which would not give off harmful fumes. In fact the paint is solvent-based. A manager at the factory told protesters that this was at Honda's insistence.

Last month Oxford City Council served an enforcement notice on the factory, ordering it to stop polluting the neighbourhood. If the stench has not been eliminated within nine months, the firm will be taken to court — which would be most embarrassing for Honda, currently expanding its operations in Britain and trying to project itself as a smiling, benevolent outfit rather than a bunch of money-grabbing polluters.

How on earth does a plant with such an appalling reputation come to be named as one of Britain's Best Factories? *Management Today* explains blithely that, for the sake of "briefness and manageability", its judges decided not to take environmental questions into consideration.

Telecommunications

Mobile telephoney

THE RECENT television advertisements for something called a Zone Phone may have left viewers with the impression that they are being offered a new type of cellular telephone. This would be somewhat misleading, because the portable Zone Phone is no where near as useful as the cellular telephone.

Firstly, it can only be used in the immediate vicinity of a Zone Phone transmitter. The company behind Zone Phone is hoping to install some 5,000 of these over the next year in busy locations such as airports, railway stations and shopping precincts. But out of range of these transmitters — some 200 yards — the Zone Phone will not work at all and, in any case, will not receive incoming calls.

Moreover, each transmitter is designed to handle only one caller at a time, increasing the likelihood of a purchaser talking to nothing more than the engaged tone

The cost of one of these miracles of modern technology is more than £200 — more than the cost of cheap car phones. The TV ads also omit the name of the company making all the expensive investment in Zone Phone. How can this be when it is none other than that picker of brilliant new projects, Ferranti?

In the City

WHILE Mohamed Fayed awaits the publication of the Department of Timidity & Inaction's report into the Harrods takeover (this month, next month, sometime never?) an old friend and business associate has found himself less fortunate in avoiding prosecution.

When the phoney pharaoh first arrived in Haiti in 1964 — he was a sheik from Kuwait then — his closest business associate was a local banker called Clemard Charles who owned the Banque Commerciale d'Haiti. In reality, Charles was the chief bag man for "Papa Doc" Duvalier.

Charles became closely involved in Fayed's abortive projects for an oil refinery and a new harbour in Haiti which resulted in the supposed Pharaoh ripping off one of the world's poorest countries for a somewhat less than pharaonic $150,000.

Fayed's hasty departure from Haiti, having failed to put up any of the finance he had promised for the two projects, did not enamour Charles to "Papa Doc". He was even less amused when he discovered that his bag man had been leaving a little too much in the bag. After spending several years in jail, Charles arrived in the US in 1980.

Undeterred by the fact that the Banque Commerciale was nothing more than a name, Charles, a would-be President of Haiti, has sought to make up for lost time by offering its services in mega-million deals while operating from a small New York apartment equipped with telexes, fax and telephone. That is he was until he was arrested in New York last July.

FBI investigators uncovered that Charles and his bank had been involved in a worthless $12 million letter of credit used to defraud banks in India with the unwitting aid of National Westminster.

Charles had also tried to extract $25 million from the Michigan National Bank by proposing a $500 million deal in US government bonds to be provided by his bank. He tried to hit on American Express Bank for $12 million with a non-existent letter of credit.

From his fax in the kitchen he offered US banks up to $3 trillion in certificates of deposit. He tried to sucker the Royal Bank of Canada with $200 million in phoney bank notes. He issued three letters of credit for $6 million in favour of the PLO, Iraq and Libya to be used as security for loans made to a candidate for president of the Dominican Republic. Further away in South Africa Charles and his Mickey Mouse Bank of Toyland are reckoned to have taken down $70 million from individuals and financial institutions.

Clemard Charles is currently on $2.5 million bail pending grand jury hearings which are likely to result in criminal indictments. He says he is no longer in touch with his former associate Mohamed Fayed.

THE GREAT and still unexplained mystery about the £200 million-plus fraud Jim Guerin masterminded at first International Signal & Control and then Ferranti is exactly how he was able to pull it off without seemingly anyone in the company either knowing or saying anything about the non-existent contracts. Those who know the defence business talk about the inches-thick documents required for any contract with foreign countries including end-user certificates, licences, letters of credit etc. Also, as previous long running frauds have shown — such as the fabled army of non-existent policyholders whose premiums fuelled the supposed growth of Equity Funding — the longer a scam runs the more help is required, wittingly or unwittingly, to make it happen.

So how did Guerin, persuasive good ole boy that he was, pull it off? How did he explain the documents or lack of them, the work in progress on the phoney contracts or lack of it? How can £100 million be syphoned off in cash without anyone noticing or checking on the recipients in Panama and Switzerland? After De Lorean and GPD Services you would have thought any auditors such as Peat Marwick would have been alerted to large payments to offshore sub-contractors.

One suggestion from those who know Guerin well is that he may have relied to a great extent on his and ISC's close contacts with the secret world of the CIA and its covert operations. National security could have been a very useful alibi for refusing to disclose full details or provide full access to contracts involving sensitive countries like China and Pakistan where the CIA is very active.

Guerin had a lot of friends in the intelligence community. It is suggested that he and ISC could have been party to a number of covert CIA operations. What better cover for a covert fraud.

Irangate showed that the CIA can be remarkably relaxed about the profits made by arms dealers like Richard Secord and Albert Hakim, not to mention drug traffickers, so long as they get the job done.

All of which may explain why Guerin has remained seemingly confident that he may yet escape the numerous investigations into his activities, particularly in the US. Perhaps he believes he may still be able to call in some of his markers with the agency.

THE FUTURE grows progressively darker for embattled empire builder Charles Keating, the erstwhile business associate of fellow right-thinker Sir "Bats" Goldsmith who can only view with surprise and shock the unfolding scandal around Keating's collapsed Lincoln Savings & Loan.

Keating and Lincoln are now the subject of investigations by the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service, the Securities & Exchange Commission, the US Senate Ethics Committee and the House Banking Committee. Five senators who received more than $1.3 million from Keating in donations have been more than embarrassed by revelations of their attempts to get federal regulators off Keating's case. When asked whether the senators were assisting him because of his contributions, Keating replied candidly: "I certainly hope so." The US taxpayer now faces a possible bill of $2.5 billion to rescue Lincoln's depositors.

Keating has been accused of paying himself and his family members some $34 million from Lincoln's parent company American Continental in salaries, bonuses and through selling back to American Continental shares they owned, in the 3½ years before it crashed last April.

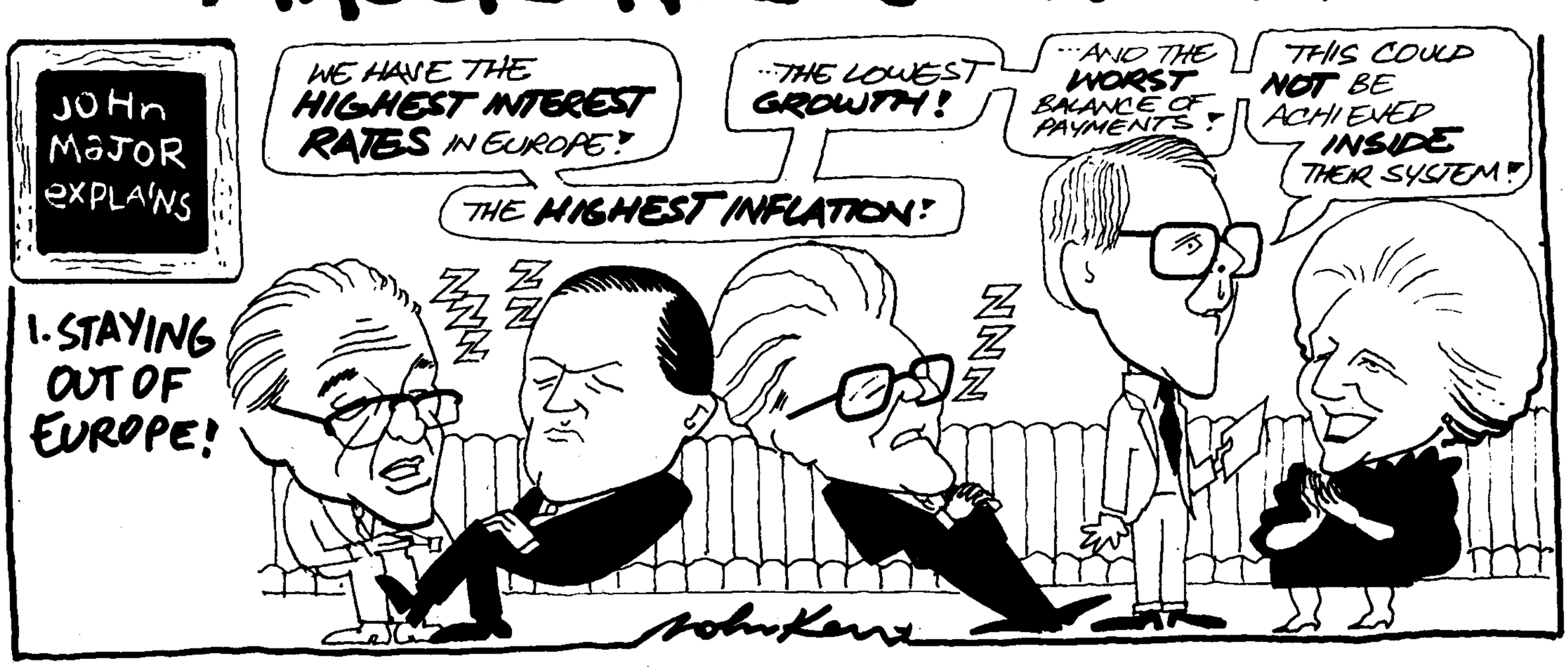
It has emerged that the Keating empire started to come apart last year when the then auditors Arthur Young quit over his attempt to boost American Continental's results by including a $56 million profit from the $81 million claimed to have been made as a result of the share swap deal whereby Lincoln ended up with 20 per cent of Goldsmith's master company, General Oriental Investments.

Touche Ross were also less than keen to follow the Keating line, suggesting that such a proposal should be approved by federal regulators first. The SEC refused to go along and, as a result, American Continental and Lincoln showed a quarterly loss. Some six months later federal regulators took over Lincoln and as a result the holding in GOI.

All of this was entirely without the knowledge of Goldsmith who had absolutely no reason to be aware of what Keating was up to at Lincoln or American Continental where he had no involvement.

'Slicker'

MAGGIE RULES OK' BY JOHN KENT



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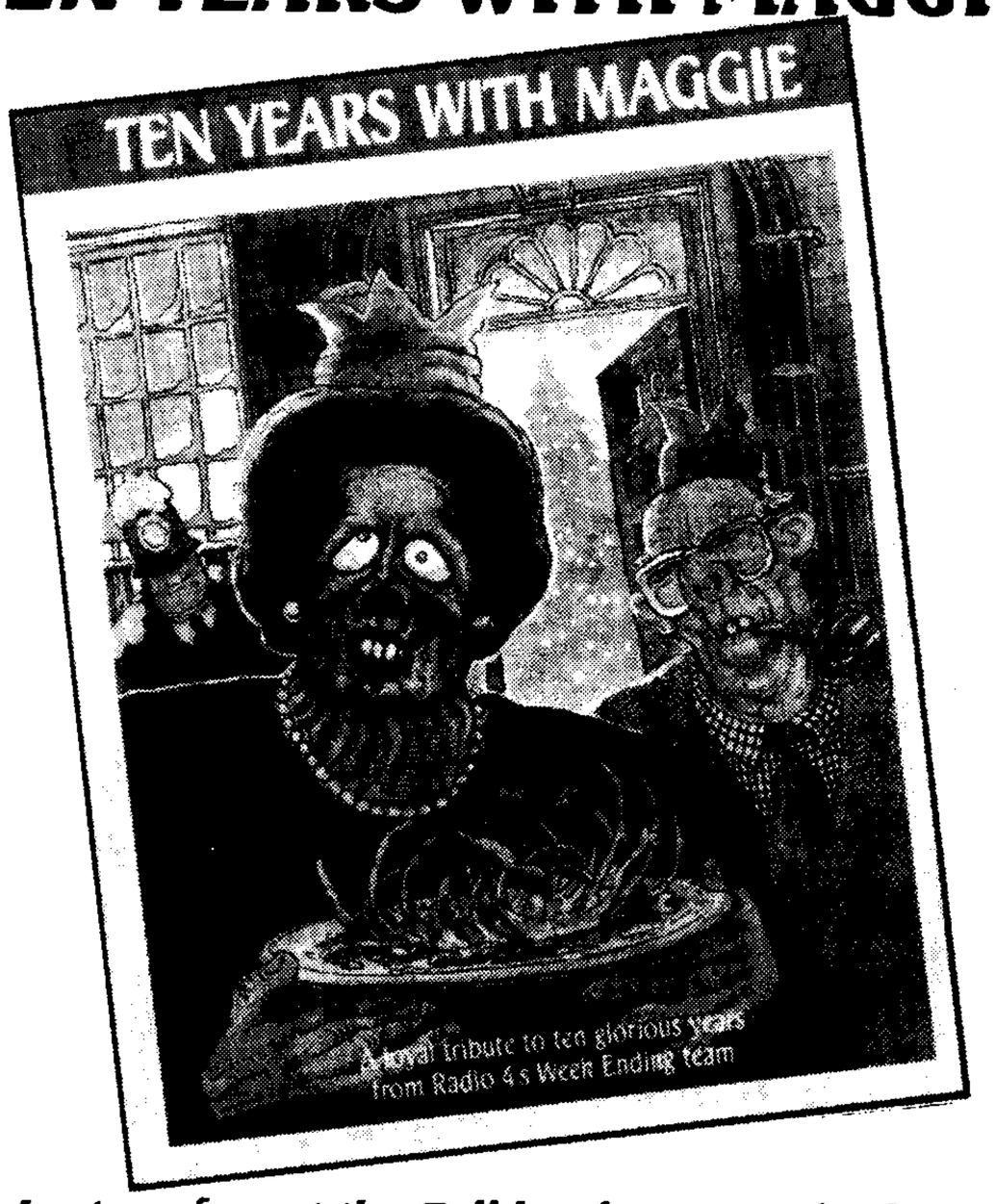

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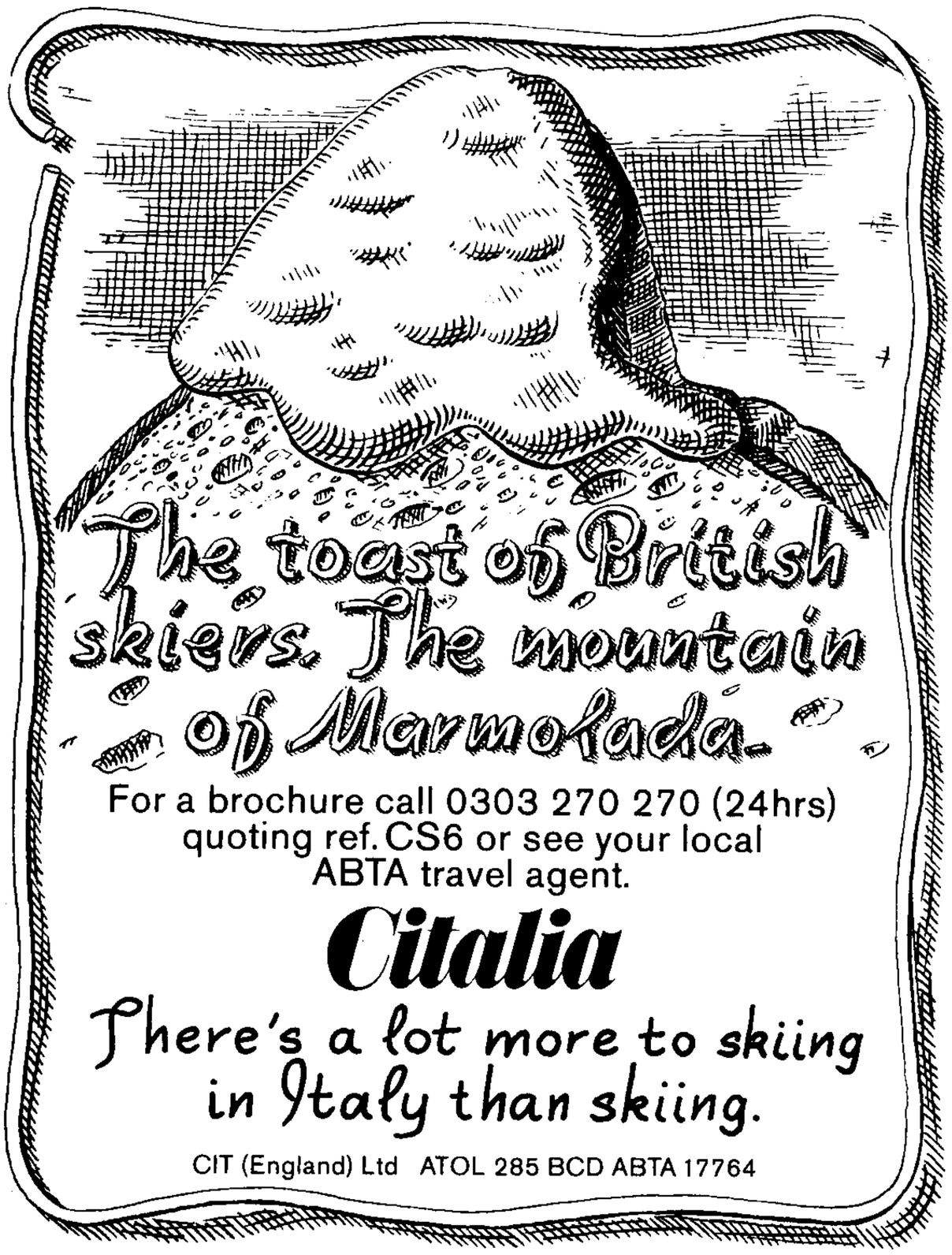

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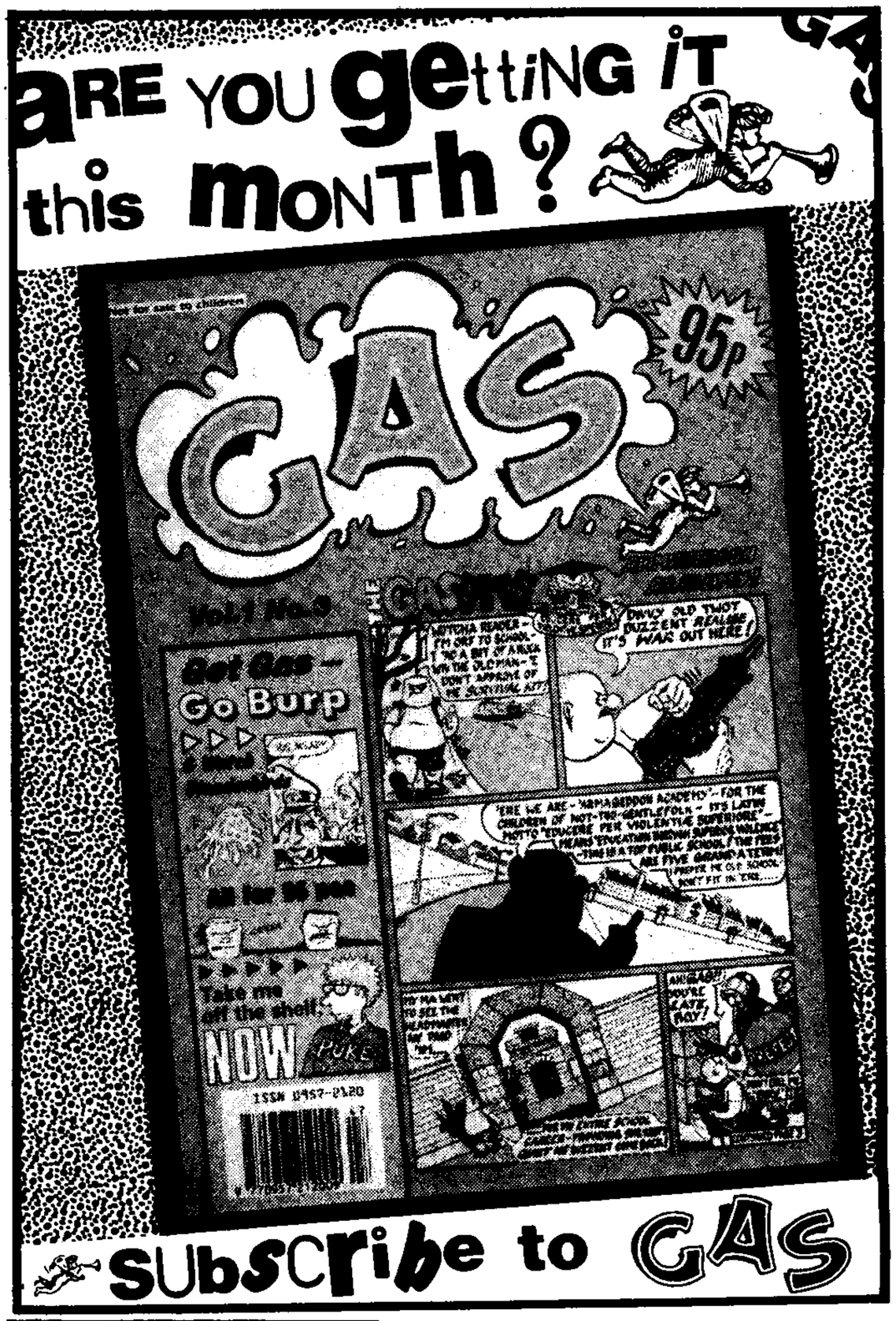

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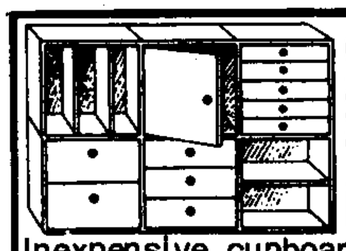

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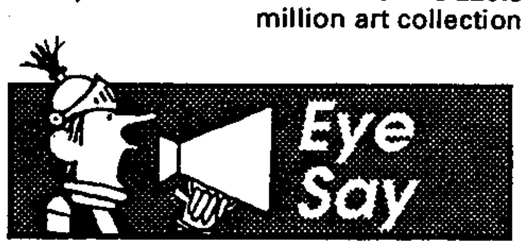

SPIKE MILLIGAN wishes to thank all the rich widows who answered his advertisement. I have selected one and I am in the process of burying her under the floorboards. I will be counting the cash tomorrow.

COMIC RELIEF has been donated an Apple printer, but unfortunately we cannot use it as we have no Apple computer! If there are any writers who due to recent success have outgrown their Apple computer, and would be willing to donate it to this sponsored charity, we would love to hear from you on 01 287 0833. Any model, however basic would be gratefully appreciated.

CARTOON COMPETITION. For details, please send SAE to: JACK DUNCAN BOOKS, 36 Fossgate, York YO1 7TF. Cash prizes, and finalists will exhibit alongside Searle, Rushton, Simmonds, Heath etc from 8-30 December in York. Competition judge — Newman.

BUNCHKIN lubs you lobes Professor Moran.

COULD M love woman who carn't smell? Thyme will tell. CRYPTAESTHESIA.

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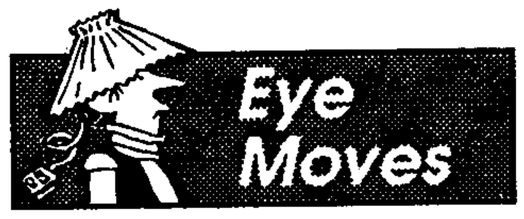

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SINGLE professional male, 33, seeks slim, attractive considerate female for laughter and romance. Surrey. Box 9329.

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ATTRACTIVE slim lady (32) seeks tall, attractive unattached male (28-35). Non-smoker preferred but good personality essential. Manchester/Liverpool area. Box 9729.

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HUMOROUS, affectionate, caring male graduate, 31 (materially secure) seeks similar female (21-35) for mutual emotional happiness and growth. Interests include conversation, music, cinema, country weekends, dining and travel. Photo and letter ensures reply. Box 10529.

SINGLE, witty Yorkshire professional male 30, seeks sensitive sensual smallish slim/shapely lady 20-40 for relationship/whatever. Phone number please. Box 10629.

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YOUNG, attractive, stressed female trainee-barrister needs TLC! Box 10929.

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FEMALE, 40, attractive, feminine, intelligent, sensitive. Desires good looking male for special stimulating romantic amusing relationship. Sharing nights out, and passionate nights in. Discretion assured. Box 11829.

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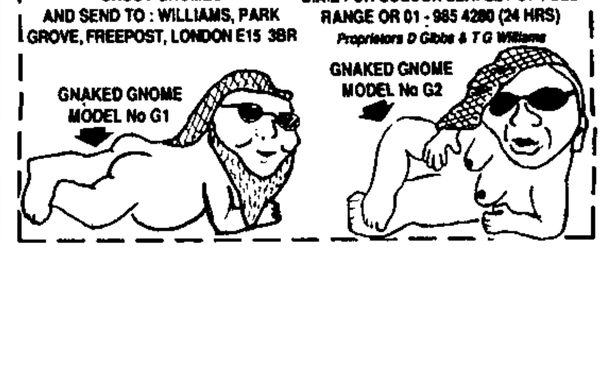

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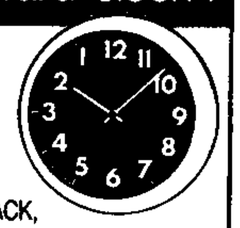

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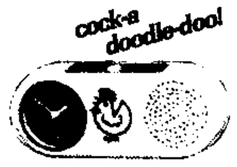

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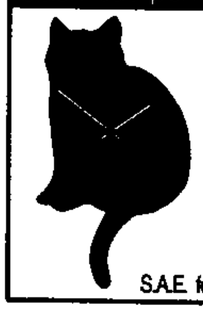

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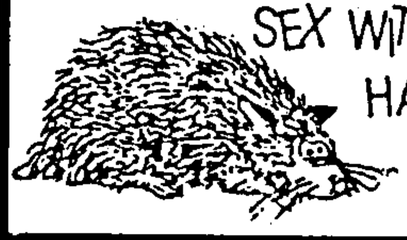

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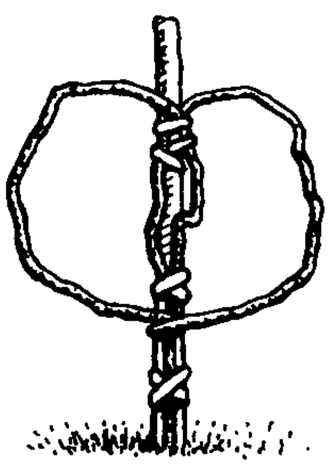
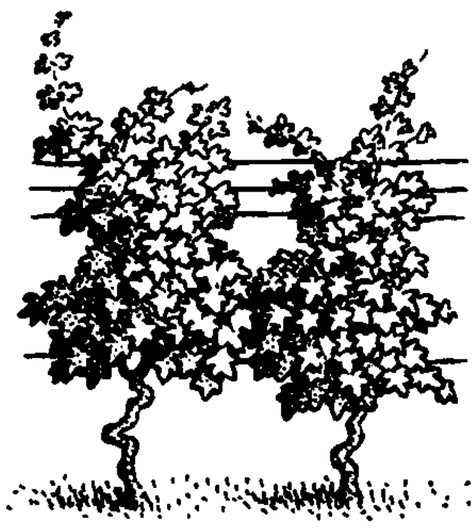
Nº 27

The Modern Vineyard

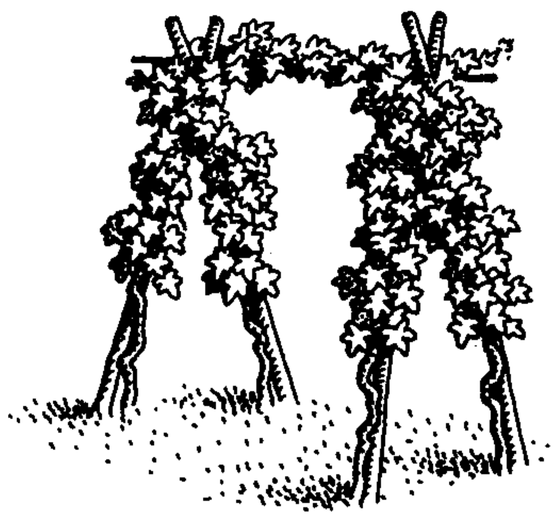
A Mosel vine after pruning.



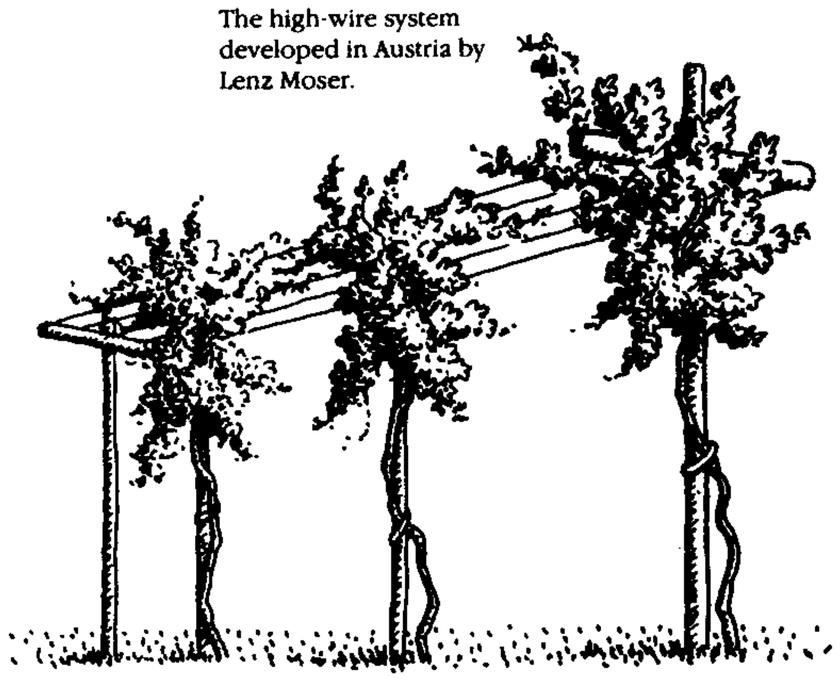
Traditional vine growing on the terraces of the Northern Rhône.



Training the vine in Bordeaux and Burgundy.

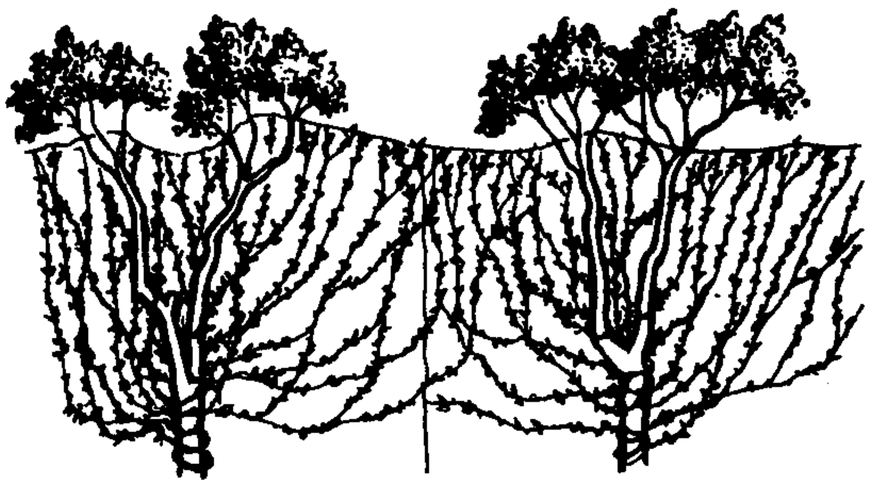


The high-wire system developed in Austria by Lenz Moser.



Portuguese vinho verde is grown along pergolas.

The Romans developed a system of growing vines up trees.



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